



the Circle

the Circle

Volume 3, Number 3 Spring, 1976

The Auburn Circle is a community publication financed through Student Activity Fees. The views expressed throughout this issue are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the publisher (the Board of Student Communications) or those of the *Circle* Editorial Board and staff. Address all correspondence to *The Auburn Circle*; 311 Union Building, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, 36830.

A NOTE ON STYLE

The variety of approaches to writing and design in this issue reflects the *Circle's* function as a laboratory publication. Although each piece was reviewed by staff members and representatives of the Editorial Board, the appearance of any article, story, poem, drawing, or photograph does not necessarily indicate unanimous critical approval.



The *Circle* is pleased to introduce next year's editor, Martha Duggar. Martha urges anyone with articles, short stories, art work, poetry, photography, informal essays, etc. to share them with the rest of Auburn University through *The Auburn Circle*, 1976-77.

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The *Circle* staff thanks the following members of the English Department for their assistance in evaluating and proofreading literary material: James Allen, Cheryl Fresch, Mary Gwin, Bert Hitchcock, Byron Hopkins, Pat Keller, Pat Morrow, Libby Rankin, and Oxford Stroud. Also thanks to Jan Cooper, Danny Adams, Cecelia Harden, Pam Minor, Jerry Sapp, Cindy Lacy, Beth Wellbaum, Warren Feist, and Melinda Forbus for proofreading, typing, and good conversation.

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THE INNER CIRCLE

There once was a young man who for educational purposes inhabited a small village. During his fourth and final season of residence, he came to be known as His Editorship and was awarded honorary duties as keeper of a special ring whose ultimate worth and potential was unknown.

The ring had been wrenched just two years earlier from a rock which stood near the center of the village campus by an enterprising collector who noticed its faint sparkle. After the young collector convinced the ruling classes to support his shaping of the rough jewel, he became the first keeper of the ring, and a small entourage of curiosity-seekers and well-wishers gathered as the ring emerged like a phoenix from the discarded piece of stone and began to take form.

The small group of devoted followers, including a Princess and a Wizard who had been attracted by the great potential of the ring, became convinced that it had a center of gold. They set about with the second keeper of the ring to shine and polish it to a brilliant luster. Layers of dust gradually fell away, revealing patches of brightness which flashed fleetingly, extinguished, and were ground away to reveal still larger flashes of color. The work was sometimes difficult but highly satisfying to those who took part. But the number of followers and onlookers remained small because of the small size and limited knowledge of the ring. The number of polishers also grew slowly, and the ruling classes rebuked the second keeper for her decision to polish the ring in her own special way on one particular side.

By this time, His Editorship, the third keeper of the ring, appeared and soon assumed his new position. He set out in a fury to guard the ring from all attacks and to encourage more residents of the village to come forth

Cover Photography by William P. White, Jr., © 1976

contents

WHAT MAKES SHORTY RUN?	4
<i>interview by David Williams</i>	
LEAVE TAKING	10
<i>fiction by Scarlett Robinson</i>	
THE INS AND OUTS OF INSURANCE: HOW NOT TO GET CHUNKED BY THE ROCK	16
<i>article by Jan Cooper</i>	
DARK SHAPES RISING	20
<i>fiction by Jim Shoffner</i>	
BYE BYE BUYCENTENNIAL	26
<i>essay by J. P. Kaetz</i>	
THE INTERVENTION OF RALPH	28
<i>fiction by John Williams</i>	
GO BLOW YOUR OWN HORN!	34
<i>book review by Thom Botsford</i>	
SAUCERS FROM THE STARS	37
<i>satire by Eroica von Fanniken</i>	
NEARSIGHTED WAKE	42
<i>sketch by Jan Boyd Neal</i>	
ISRAEL: PAST AND PRESENT	46
<i>article by Heleni Pedersoli</i>	
YOU'RE IT	54
<i>fiction by Bubba Wright</i>	
FADS	56
<i>humor by Jeff Bishop</i>	
A MODEST ANNOUNCEMENT	59
<i>by Jack Mountain</i>	

POEMS throughout the issue by:

C. Ackerman, Danny Adams, Susan Bassett, Janice Bickham, Diana Brooks, Leslie Cost, Joseph Cotten, Carol Danner, Tina Davis, Martha Duggar, Cathy Ellis, Christy Hudgins, Percy Jones, Karen W. Lambert, Billy Leonard, Mark McCullough, Chris Morris, A. Charles Murphy, Jackie Neeley, Jane Sterchi Parry, Heleni Pedersoli, Tom Snelling, Linda Snow, Helen Speaks, Nancy Strachan, Jim Warren, Susan White, A. J. Wright.

and help polish it so that all might share in the resulting wealth. The ruling classes smiled hesitantly and the ring suddenly expanded, growing to half-again its former size. Its outer appearance changed with the changing of the seasons, and as the numbers of polishers and offerings increased, the ridges and undulations along the ring's surface continued to melt away more rapidly into a smoother, more continuous band, and the grain of the falling dust became finer as the rich glossiness underneath continued to reveal itself in flashes of color.

But by the end of His Editorship's term as keeper of the ring, the valued form still lacked the perfect shape and brilliant luster for which he had strived. Some members of the ruling classes questioned the ring's worth a second time, and lonely and disconsolate His Editorship attempted to comprehend his failings and successes.

He knew of course that the ruling

classes had to watch over more than just the ring alone and that their powers were already stretched to the limit. He knew also that many of the inhabitants of the village remained ignorant or indifferent to the ring because of its small size and depth of color.

He wanted to shout to the onlookers, to make them understand that the entire circumference of the ring was not intended to satisfy all who observed it, that each one must look to the particular sparkles of hue and tone which most pleased him, and that many times one must look beyond the surface in order to perceive the true shade.

He wanted to explain that the growth of the ring and the perfection of shape and purity of color must necessarily depend upon the number of polishers, the quality of offerings, and the support of not only the ruling classes but of all concerned.

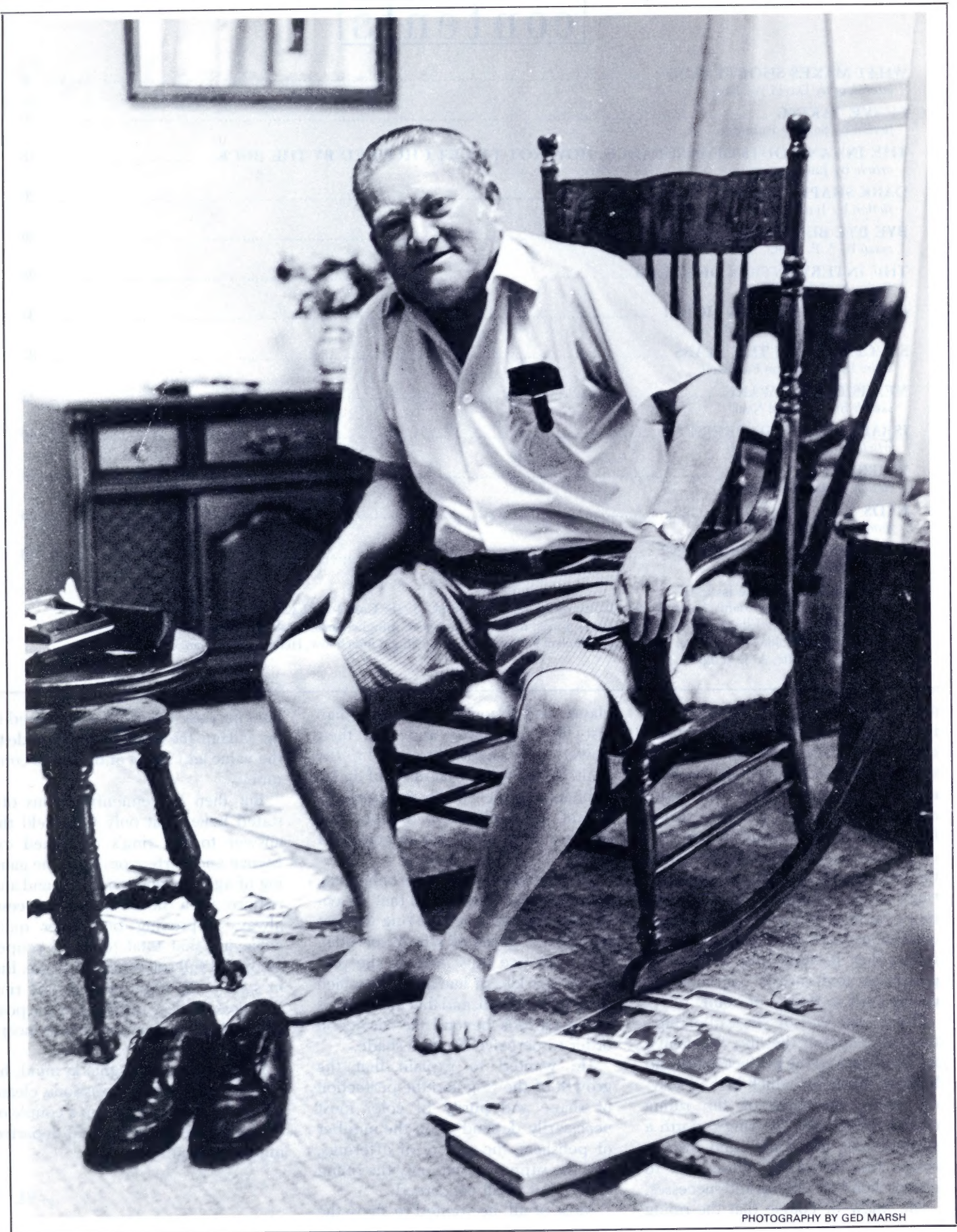
Most of all, he wanted to show the

vital purpose which the ring served in the village, the contribution it made to the value and shape of the entire community.

But then he remembered his oft-stated belief that only time held the answer to the ring's continued existence and perfection. With the gaining of age, the ring would expand and mature in a never-ending process, always improving but never quite achieving that total touch of proper color and full roundness of shape. But in spite of its imperfections, the ring was nevertheless fulfilling its purpose and had in fact done so from its inception.

Bearing these thoughts in mind, he packed his meager possessions, cleaned out his desk, picked up a couple of copies of the last issue, and departed mildly content.

—BL



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GED MARSH

WHAT MAKES SHORTY RUN?

BY DAVID WILLIAMS

Rambling through twenty-five years of Alabama politics would take its toll on any man. But to Ralph "Shorty" Price—a man with a clicking cellophane bag of teeth in his pocket, a Bud in his hand, and a Tampa Nugget between his gums—twenty-five years of Alabama politics has only begun to toughen the soft spots. From his Louisville home deep in the heart of George Wallace Country, Shorty Price directs his eleventh campaign in almost twenty-six years toward its ultimate goal (he hopes) of selling a million copies of his book, *Alabama Politics—Tell It Like It Is*.

Since qualifying on February seventh to be placed on the ballot as a delegate to the National Democratic Convention from the State of Alabama, District Twenty-three, Shorty has gone on to also qualify as a bonafide presidential candidate. His delegate platform for the nine Alabama counties he will represent if elected is simple—he's pledged to Shorty Price for President, and his presidential platform lists three reasons for running: (1) Stop George Wallace. ("America doesn't need a Demagogue in the White House."); (2) Sell a million copies of his book—*Alabama Politics—Tell It Like It Is*. (For a ten dollar donation get the true story about George Wallace); and (3) Save America by electing a non-politician president.

Shorty explained that presidential candidate Jimmy Carter of Plains, Georgia, has taken care of *reason one* and, if Carter is elected, *reason three* will also be out of his hands. But as for *reason two*, Shorty works night and day toward its fulfillment. During twenty-five years as a "non-politician" ("I've never been elected; run in ten races and lost ten—a perfect record"),

Shorty has intermixed his career as a perennial candidate with careers as an insurance salesman and used car salesman. And if that experience is any indication, Shorty Price is just likely to sell a million copies of his book. The list of persons who already have a copy is impressive. Headed by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, it contains such notables as Governor Julian Carroll of Kentucky, New York Jets quarterback Joe Namath, Alabama Senator Jim Allen, Congressman Bill Dickinson, who has half a copy, Governor Ray Blanton of Tennessee, former North Carolina Governor Terry Sanford, Pulitzer Prize winning author Professor J. A. Carroll of Troy State University, and the governor of Vermont, Thomas Salmon. Shorty even sent a copy to President Ford, "But you know what he did? He vetoed it. Didn't even bother to open it, just sent it on back." Shorty also sent one to former-president Richard M. Nixon, who also sent his copy back. "I addressed it to ex-president Nixon, you know, there at San Clemente, and I guess he didn't like being addressed as ex-president. I should of sent it to him addressed as former president. He might of bought it then."

Shorty lives in a small pre-fab home with his wife Delores and daughter Vickie. He also has two sons, Donnie Ray, by a former marriage, and a second son, Ralph Price, Jr. When he's not out campaigning or selling books, he farms a relatively large vegetable garden and worries about car payments. But what makes a man like Shorty Price tick? How can a man keep running against such insurmountable odds and keep coming back for more? It has been said that there is a stipulation in a will requiring that he run for office in order to receive his in-

heritance, but he tells a different story:

**'You gotta steal
public money,
get your nose
in the trough,
get caught,
and go to the pen
before you're a
full-blooded politician.'**

Circle: Do you have to run for office in order to receive any kind of inheritance?

Shorty Price: Daddy died when I was four and Grandpa died in 1947. My two brothers and myself and two sisters each received exactly one dollar and twenty-eight cents. For over a quarter of a century George Wallace has been telling folks that I have money and it's a damn lie. The bankers of Alabama invite me to bring my money to their bank and invest it and I've shown them this piece of paper for so long it's worn out. [He holds a check-size receipt by the corner and it falls open like a well-worn book, revealing his legal inheritance.] Ain't got none and I ain't never had none. Been working all my life. Never got my nose in the trough, never been caught, never been in the pen, and I'm not a politician. You gotta steal public money, get your nose in the trough, get caught, and go to the pen before you're a full-blooded politician.

I ran my wife for governor in 1966, but she wasn't but twenty-

three and George Wallace was running his wife so he had the IRS check me out. They attached my car so I had to withdraw her to get my money back. I was born naked and barefoot. A dollar and twenty-eight cents was a slow start and I ain't never been elected and I just survive from day to day.

**'A crook's a crook,
a liar's a liar,
and a bum's a bum,
whether he or she is
from Washington, D. C.,
or Montgomery, Alabama.'**

Circle: What about your book? How did it begin and how are the sales going?

Shorty Price: It cost me \$7,000 to get my manuscript published. I went all over Alabama getting orders for my book. It was a hundred and ninety dollars down and a hundred and ninety dollars a month for thirty-six months with Vantage Press in New York. That's what I had to do to get my book published. On July 24, 1972, I started selling them for \$10.00 for an autographed copy in hopes of paying it off in less than three years. I worked day and night. Dr. David Mathews has a copy. Bear Bryant bought a copy on August 19 on the football field at the beginning of that fateful 1972 season. I still have his check.

I've sold 3,150 copies at ten dollars a copy. No sweat, no problem. A lot of people said Shorty's book won't be a best seller. But it's the best thing that happened to me. What does it take to be a best seller? When I started selling books, these Doubting Thomases around here said I would never sell 700 copies. Instead of 700, I've sold 3,150. Nobody in this whole state could of done what I've done. I got a write up in the *Southern Star* [Ozark's community newspaper]: "Shorty Completes Successful Campaign."

Circle: What was the highlight of your career as an author?

Shorty Price: Senator Bill Dickinson gave me five dollars right here in downtown Louisville, and I sent him a book and told him to send me the other five dollars. And you know what he did? He went to a printing company, cut the book half in two, sent half of it back, and told me what I could do with it. He's running for Congress this time, but he kept over half of it so he ain't even eligible—or capable rather—of cutting a book half in two. But he can raise his own salary and he's on a trip to China right now. He even released a letter to the press saying I hounded him all over the state of Alabama trying to get my ten dollars.

And down in Dothan, Alabama, I asked Senator Bill Dickinson once to introduce me to Senator Barry Goldwater, and he said he didn't know how. Well, I introduced myself and said, "I didn't vote for you, but my wife Delores voted for you and I wish I had now." I introduced myself and didn't talk about my book and he said that Delores was a mighty fine woman. I would hate to die of a heart attack or something and have my social security get hung up and my wife have to write to Senator Dickinson. Why hell would freeze over and she would die of starvation before he got anything done with that thing.

Circle: What do you have against George Wallace?

Shorty Price: I saw George Wallace at the convention the year I voted for John Sparkman for vice president and held my nose at the same time because Adlai Stevenson was the presidential candidate, but I wanted Sparkman so I voted for Stevenson. Well sir, George asked how I was doing financially and I told him just fine, and he said, "Here, Shorty Price, take this hundred dollars and enjoy yourself at the convention." I grabbed up that bill and turned around to look at it and it was a dollar, one lousy dollar. I was so damn mad I could of cut him half in two. And when I got back, everybody in the Clayton area had heard that George Wallace had given Shorty Price a hundred dollars and wasn't he a nice man? What a

good man George Wallace was. You know, while America is plagued with Watergate, I maintain that Alabama is plagued with Wallacegate. A crook's a crook, a liar's a liar, and a bum's a bum, whether he or she is from Washington, D.C., or Montgomery, Alabama. George Wallace and I roomed together at the University of Alabama Law School for one semester before the war, and it took him only five minutes to snow me like he has the people of Alabama, and it lasted for over ten years. He would drop by every now and then and give me a booster shot just to make sure I was still snowed. Not any more. George Wallace is a con-artist, and now that Wallace is losing, my book sales are picking up.

Circle: You have another area of interest besides politics. Tell us about the University of Alabama and your relation with the Capstone.

Shorty Price: I recorded a record once—"Shorty Price, Flying High to the Orange Bowl," and on the flip side is "Collect Call to the LA International Airport." That's the Louisville, Alabama, Airport, not Los Angeles, you see. We have a paved cow pasture here we call the LA International Airport. You see, I'm Alabama's eternal cheerleader. They put the Big Three of famous alumni in the *Corolla* (Alabama's



yearbook), and they were Dr. David Mathews, Coach Bear Bryant, and Shorty Price. In 1966, the Big Three were Joe Namath, the player; Bear Bryant, the coach; and Shorty Price, the cheerleader.

The year before the Bear came to Alabama, Wentworth was coach and we went 0 and 10, the same record I've got, and then Bear Bryant came to Alabama and the Crimson Tide began to roll. I believe we were 6-3-1 that first year and 5-4-1 the next, and after that the Bear has taken Alabama to 16 straight post-season games and I've been to thirteen. After all, Shorty Price is Alabama's number one fan and I think that's a pretty good record for a working man. That first bowl game, the Liberty Bowl in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, against Penn State, I got my picture in the paper holding up a pair of long johns. Boy, was it cold up there and we battled those Yankees until they finally scored and won the game 7 to 0. But we got 'em back last year. I was there, too.

Circle: Concerning your past record in politics, how close have you come to being elected?

Shorty Price: In 1954 I ran for lieutenant governor and endorsed Big Jim Folsom. We were the Mutt and Jeff of Alabama Politics. In 1953 on Labor Day we had our picture taken together and I've been called Shorty ever since. Big Jim was six foot eight inches tall, you see, and I'm four foot twelve, or five foot and a gnat's hair. That picture almost got me elected all by itself. Big Jim, who was elected in 1946, said he wasn't going to get involved in the lieutenant governor's race that year and then he

'Folsom, Wallace, and Trickidy Dick Nixon are like three peas in a pod. They know every dirty trick in the book.'



turns right around and goes down to Dothan where George Wallace introduces him. And who do you think is there but my opponent, Guy Hardwick—my only opponent. I voted for Big Jim in 1946 and told him so, but I wouldn't vote for him for dog catcher now. Folsom, Wallace, and Trickidy Dick Nixon are like three peas in a pod. They know every dirty trick in the book.

In my first race in 1950 I ran for the state legislature against Sim Thomas of Eufaula, an incumbent, and when Beat One came in over WUAL, Alabama's school radio, I was ahead eight to five and I liked to had a running fit. I also beat him good here in my home town, and I was only campaigning on weekends against an incumbent with the political machinery. I ended up with eight of sixteen beats and I think that's pretty good. Only thing I

could run for now and win would be the state line. So many have said they would like to see me go, and

'Only thing I could run for now and win would be the state line.'

now a lot are saying that about Wallace. He thinks he's going to run Cornelia, but I'm going to vote for him for president because we want to get him out of Alabama. Alabamians have had a belly full of Folsoms and Wallaces. Our great-great-grandchildren will be paying off these damn bond issues the Folsoms and Wallaces put around our necks like albatrosses. In Big

Jim's day it was fifty or sixty million dollars, and with Wallace it has been a hundred or a hundred and twenty-five million. Wallace thinks nothing of sending Rankin Fite to New York to sell them bonds to those New York Jews, and the people of Alabama have to pick up the tab for his good time while he gets the \$30,000 commission. Then Wallace turns around when Rankin gets back and tells him to split the commission with Gerald, Wallace's younger brother, because he needs some money.

'Our great-great-grandchildren will be paying off these damn bond issues the Folsoms and Wallaces put around our necks like albatrosses.'

Circle: If you've never been elected to the conventions as a delegate, how do you explain getting in all the publicity you received?

Shorty Price: Well, I hitchhiked to Chicago in 1956 with ten dollars in my pocket, because I received 56,000 votes and I needed 60,000, so I wasn't going to let a measley 4,000 votes stop me. The night before the convention I had a dollar left, and I spent it on a cup of coffee and a doughnut and then called George Wallace and asked him to lend me twenty-five dollars until I got back to Alabama and picked up my insurance check. I was selling insurance at the time, and he said that Lurleen was flying in that morning and he was too busy working on the platform and he was just a little ol' probate judge making \$8500 a year and didn't have any money. So I hit the bars, asking the delegates with their badges on if I could have their badge and go to the convention. I would tell them to have another drink and go home and go to bed and let me have your badge, you know, and I finally found a delegate from New York who gave me his badge and I got in.

So I went to the first session, and Sam Rayburn of Texas was selected chairman and gaveled the first session and said we would reconvene at eight o'clock that night. I didn't have a ticket to get back in so I just sat down all by myself and waited the six hours until the session reopened. During this time a cop brings me some sandwiches and some coffee and some reporters come over and take my picture and the next thing I know I'm in the newspapers and someone just gives me their ticket and I went to every session after that. That night was when George came in and offered that supposedly hundred dollars. I was so mad I could of cut him half in two with one of them .45 caliber machine guns like I used on the Krauts in Europe.

Circle: Do you think your arrest record will influence your chances for the presidency?

Shorty Price: All I got to do is announce I'm running and Wallace's goon squads throw me in jail. And the press or media isn't much better since Wallace controls them, too. I held a press conference on the steps of the Capitol in Washington, D. C., and invited the Associated Press, the U.P.I., and the *Washington Post*, and only the U. P. I. showed up. But the papers, radio, and television in Alabama didn't even pick up on it. They give me the silent treatment and tear me apart. I ain't planning on winning; the probability is high that I won't, so I ain't planning on it. I am a bonafide candidate for the presidency and I get mail from New York, Waco, Texas, you know all over, asking me for literature and buttons. I'm going to have some bumper stickers printed up, but I got to sell some books first to get the money.

Two people in the whole state of Alabama have been in my way all this time and they're Big Jim Folsom and George C. Wallace. I helped to create and make them, a Frankenstein you might say, and they've been against me from the start. But I'll get the last laugh because the further George gets from the White House, the better my books sell, and if I'm not elected to the Democratic

'Two people in the whole state of Alabama have been in my way all this time and they're Big Jim Folsom and George C. Wallace. I helped to create and make them, a Frankenstein you might say, and they've been against me from the start.'

Convention, I'll go anyway and find one of those delegates and give him a copy of my book for his ticket. Hell, the book company ain't but five blocks down the street from Madison Square Garden, so the main thing I plan on doing is to sell books right on down the line.

Circle: And after that, what becomes of Shorty Price?

Shorty Price: I'm going to write another book, *Damn Excuses Why Not To Buy A Book*, because I've heard them all. But it'll probably turn out to be an autobiography. Many people say my book borders on libel, but it's the truth because I've lived it.





PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILL DICKEY

A ONCE GIRL

A once girl sits and is smiling
 taints of red and white shine a face
 transform becoming to an is
 At last—the bauble of nose
 finished.
 A Clown!
 Fantastical creation of if because of why
 A reflection is painted and life begins
 Laughter explodes in tumbling frolicking whimsical patterns
 And ends.
 Echoes of claptor resound somewhere between beyond and into
 far into, an abyss of self
 And back again.
 A once clown sits and is crying.

—Jackie Neeley

LOVE

There's talk of its coming and going,
 The ups and downs,
 The never knowing.
 Nevertheless, a motorcycle ride
 Is real. To be astride
 An engine is much too good
 To leave time to agonize
 Whether I should.

Don't come bringing
 Some abstract groping
 About "will it last?"
 I know what you're hoping.

This is as real
 As the ground his Suzuki stands on.
 Nothing about it to grasp.
 You can lay your hands on
 This. Nobody should settle
 For less than blue eyes, power,
 And bright red metal.

—Martha Duggar

LEAVE TAKING

FICTION BY SCARLETT ROBINSON

Editor's note: Miss Robinson developed this story from a brief sketch in Let Us Now Praise Famous Men as a tribute to author James Agee.

She had taken a chair and set it in the doorway to provide a net for the breeze. The reflection of the late sun drifted and danced in the girl's hair, like lost children caught in an autumn wood, and the man, caught by the beauty, let go the well rope and the bucket banged its way back down the stone and plopped to the water below.

The girl laughed buoyantly and swung up from her chair toward him.

"Mr. Gabriel, Mr. Gabriel. Here—I'll get 'cher water for you," she called.

She liked being near him. So nice and polite he was, almost as if he weren't a stranger no more. But even so, never did she know what to say around him. Him being educated up-East folk and being a man, too, of course.

As she drew the water with her hands high and steady on the rope, he noted how serious and resolute her eyes were and how quickly the initial merriment evaporated, leaving a low white speck of light, or was it dust, on the deep russet of her eyes.

The soft lines of her bosom ebbed gently against her plain cotton dress, and he watched her as a man might watch a jonquil being buried in a sudden drift of snow. He felt helpless, almost shy around her, though it had been some time since he had been shy with a woman.

A leaf drifted groundward, capturing the light like a rotating gold disc,

swaying this way, that way—red, gold, red-gold, red. She caught it in the bucket of water. It floated momentarily at the top of the water, then dipped under and downward again. He wondered if she had noticed it, but her eyes never met his. She flicked it out and poured him a cup.

He sipped it slowly. "That was a good supper you and your sister fixed tonight."

"Thank you. By the time we get done with it, I'm so hot it's more'n I can stand to sit down to it."

He drank the rest of the water in one gulp and spat a little of the water over the ground. "You still planning on leaving tomorrow, Virginia Mae?"

"Reckon as I have to, Mr. Gabe. Norma Jean is strong against me going all that distance. Don't think she likes my husband too much anyway...But seems that's how it is." Her bare feet played in the soft ground dust.

He was silent. One eye squinted at the departing sun. Was she going without understanding why?

"Whatsa matter with you, Gabe?" she said, accidentally losing the "Mr.," suddenly frightened by the lines between his eyes and those lines sharp beneath them.

He brightened. "Hey, since it's your last night here then, let me take you to town? We could get a soda pop or something."

The idea excited her: Macon and its lights; soldiers and smoke; women in fancy hats and gentlemen with black boots. And her and Gabe in his car like rich folk. But she wondered if it would be all right for her to go out with him, being as she was married. "Wait a

minute. Lemme ask Norma Jean." Her words trailed behind her like a banner as she ran into the house.

This was the first time since they'd met that he had summoned courage to ask to be alone with her. He had known her almost three weeks, ever since he had boarded with the Danners, having come South to do a report on the cotton-dominated economy for the government. She had not been there too much longer than he. Her husband, a farmer, decided to move from Eatonton, a small country town a half-day's drive from Macon, to another farm in Mississippi. While he was setting up a place to live, she visited her sister Norma Jean and her family. Though it had gone unspoken, everyone knew that it might be the last time they saw Virginia Mae. Gabe resolved not to be gone long, so that she would have more time with the family tonight. He hoped it would be all right with Norma Jean and George for her to go.

The screen door banged somewhere in the dusk and Virginia Mae ran toward him. "Hope I didn't keep you waiting too long," she exclaimed breathlessly, wrapping her shawl around her shoulders. Her hair had been tied back with a cellulose pink comb, and the aroma of vanilla flavoring radiated from her.

The night sky dropped like velvet over the gently sloping hills, as she and Gabe walked toward town taking shortcuts through pastures. Her night had been clouded somewhat because Gabe chose not to bring his car. But she had never before seen a man taken up



ILLUSTRATION BY WILLIAM T. LIVESAY

so by the sky and the land and the niggers walking out into the woods together. She floated on his happiness. She would have liked to have taken hold of his hand, but it wouldn't have been proper. Instead she skipped about him, accepting with quiet, grateful nods the bits of knowledge he offered like flowers.

The walk was over before they knew it, and soon they were sitting in Malcolm's Drug Store. She ordered a Southway Orange and he a Coca-Cola. It was hot and the air seemed thick, even though two great blades caked in dust churned the air overhead, mixing the milky odors of the ice-cream counter with the oily-sweet pomade of the farmers' slicked-back hair. The radio was turned on for war news, but songs played instead.

"What's that song?" she asked. "I heard it a long time ago, but I can't place it."

"Jeannie With the Light Brown Hair," he replied, turning his stool to face her. He touched the end of her hair and smiled. She smiled back at him, but the old seriousness and sadness darkened her eyes. She bit her lip childishly and returned to her drink. She told herself it was not wrong to smile back at him. Who knows, this might be the last town I ever see, she thought, resolving desperately to be happy on this night. The night itself was too electric for sadness. Yet, she found herself returning to the thought—if Lee ever smelled clean like Gabe, if he could tell her things she didn't know, if he ever treated her to a Coke and let her buy pretty clothes and wouldn't worry and accuse her of flirting with other men, then maybe it would be tolerable for her. She could almost smell the old fear creeping into her nostrils. Lee had been her husband for three years, ever since she was sixteen. Even if he didn't always do right by her, he might take to drink or kill himself if she left him. Sometimes he was real nice to her, she thought, remembering one evening after supper he slipped his false teeth out a little ways and smiled at her.

She was very quiet in the drugstore. Gabe offered to take her dancing. She bowed her head toward him and slid

off her stool. They walked along Georgia Avenue under the great oaks, sometimes stopping to gaze in a doorway where light and music and laughter poured.

If I offered to take her away, where would I take her? Gabe asked himself. New York? He could see her waiting up late for him to come home from work. Maybe she would have to work in a factory. Factory or farm both would strip the blush from her cheeks and the radiance from her eyes. Lee, at least, had a home to give her. What is it even that I really feel for her—love, compassion, longing?

If only she could sip now and then from the cups of beauty. These Southerners, these poor earth-sweaters, he thought. Though they respected and longed after the rotted prettiness of luckier classes, of white mansions and doilies, they saw no romance in their own rustic life. The sky here was like a child playing among his mother's white curtains, but to them it was only friend or foe to their farming. The land was their crops, nothing more. Why did she not take note of this beauty? he wondered. Is it because she is so white and voluptuous, so like a full moon, that she takes it for granted? Is it because in the poverty and in the sun, her youth will dry and in ten years she will be bony and sunken like Norma Jean? Maybe it is not so bad. Maybe I just think this because it is October, so sad and beautiful at the same time.

Much later, their faces flushed to embers from the dancing, they were cast like seeds into the rich earth of the night. The earth itself had been relegated to myth by the light of the moon. The girl was carrying a baby doll they had found in a rubbish heap just outside of town. Half of its face had been charred by fire, yet it still smiled sweetly. Gabe had found it and placed it in her arms. A gift, he said. She wished she and Lee could have a child. The last two years she had prayed to be pregnant, but every month there was the disappointment. Maybe she should have seen a doctor while she was here.

His face caught by shadows, Gabe looked like a black man in the

moonlight. She started laughing and could not lift a reason from her imagination to explain it. It burst suddenly from her like air spewing from a balloon. Trying to hide it, she started running down through the open pasture and her laughter became a veil that tripped behind her. Gabe hurried after her, laughing a little too, to see her moving suddenly upon the night like a freed mare.

But, alone in the pasture, the stars seemed to come whirling down upon her like headlights of a hundred cars. They were so low and their breath was frozen in indifference. Even the black background of the night was low and heavy and breathing dangerously upon her. She screamed. Gabriel rushed to her and caught her in the crook of his arm. "What, what?" he whispered. When there was no answer, an immense pity generated from him toward all who dwell in the shadows of earth and feel alone and weightless beneath the order of the stars.

"It's nothing. It's okay. Maybe the dancing made you a little drunk. All that whirling," he said, smoothing the tangled long hair beneath his hand.

They were still for a long time. He could feel the punctuation of her uplifted breasts against his chest. Now is the time, he thought. But he couldn't kiss her, or offer her anything. Instead he said, "Hey, you know what I got all over my shoes?" He held her back from him. She laughed and he smiled. They walked to the porch of the little house where all the others were waiting and said good night. She went inside and he stayed on the porch smoking a cigarette.

II

All too soon the morning came: Norma Jean, still dazed with sleep herself, stubbed across the cool gritty floor to heat the water for coffee and shaving. In her sister's room, she drew the cotton gauze apart quietly, careful to allow the bright sun gently to lift Virginia Mae from her sleep. Awakened, the two boys grumbled incoherently as they shook their naked limbs free from the crumpled sheet and into the brisk October morning. The boys' bodies were fresh from their Saturday

tub baths, and they were reverent with the Sunday clothes their mother had laid out for them. They always dressed special on Sundays, but today was made even more special by their young aunt's leaving.

"Virginer Mae, George, Arthur, Bowie, Mr. Gabe. Ya'll come to the table," called Norma Jean, glubbing oatmeal into each of the bowls on the table.

Her husband was the first to come. George Danner, in the rural tradition of older men, wore suspenders with a blue pin stripe down each side of them and a stiffly starched white shirt underneath. The collar pinched the brutal red of his prominent Adam's apple.

Bowie was the last to arrive. The juices of sleep crusted like sugar to the corners of his eyes and mouth, he scanned the table sourly.

"Git awn back to the porch and wash yer face," his father growled, cutting butter with his spoon to ladle across his hot biscuits.

There was little talk at the table. What was there lingered in the space of silence and served mostly to keep from unnerving them as they forced their tightened stomachs to accept the oatmeal.

Gabriel offered his car that they might go riding to the church. After breakfast, he thanked them for the meal and strolled onto the porch. He propped his elbows on the screenless ledging, noting a blackbird flying low over a field of dying cotton. Soon the boys came tumbling out of the house.

He strolled to the black Ford and rolled down the windows for the others who were trailing behind him out of the house. Both boys jumped in the front seat and began blowing the horn. The women folk straggled out of the house, burdened with sacks and shoes dangling from their arms. Gabe yelled to them to wait and met them half-way down the dusty steps to help. Virginia seemed pleased, but no more than her sister, whose hair bun was betraying its severity with straggles of damp brown.

The children watched out the windows like stick faces on stick men, staring out of some yellowed comic page, as they drove down the clay road. The silence was trapped in the car like the yellow October sunshine.

It was not long to the Good Hope Baptist Church. There was a small cemetery in the yard beyond where the wagons and cars were parked. The boys stared foreignly at other children as they walked into the church.

Soon, the preacher's hands raised up like a skeleton's salute. He was a thin grey man, with a bald dome. "Brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters..." he called his congregation to order.

They sat in the church: the two boys' hands, small and hard, clutched nervously against the stiffness; next to them, their father's hands, large, though knotty and calloused. His nails had been scrubbed brutally, but they were dyed a perpetual ochre. They lay as close as a fingernail to his wife's aged, slender hands with nails broken and peeled and with streaks of dirt in the quick. One of her hands clutched her sister's upturned palm. The veins in Virginia Mae's hand stood out purple against her white flesh. Her other hand scratched at her left arm. She tried hard not to press against Gabriel. But it couldn't be helped that the bareness of her arm touched the bareness of his arm beneath their sleeves. After a while, she relaxed the arm muscles and the beads of perspiration formed lines that ran together like a river. It was too warm in the church. He watched out of the corner of his eye as his trickle of sweat and hers mixed together.

He found it hard to pray. Especially here. If he had just given her a helluva good time in bed, he thought, he might have given her some uproar of spirit to think upon and maybe it would have saved her.

He thought back to the previous night, when he sat smoking on the porch outside her room. She lay in the darkness behind the closed door opposite the sleeping boys. Had he known that she was not asleep, that the faint fingers of the night cooled the

fragrant warmth between her breasts, had he known, what then?

He imagined somewhat: She would lean against him like a child, exciting without the delicate deliberation of grown lovers. Perhaps she would draw away, uncertain and shivering.

Then he would ask: Are you frightened?

And a halting escape of breath: Yes. Of me?

Yes...No.

But no, goddamit; he cursed himself for his thoughts. These people stain too easily with guilt. They must get their share of hell on earth, believing that they will see no more of it when they get to those pearly gates. It is good, he thought, that their spirit is not awakened when they die to find out they have been cheated out of their lives by their God. He wondered if that indeed was what ghosts were all about—starved spirits brought back to life by the sheer rage.

Probably they did not question about God, like Virginia didn't question why she was going to leave. Poor Lee, obsessed with possession like all these other God-forsaken men of the conquered province with no land to call their own. They were even impoverished of their anger toward those sons of landed men who lived off the sweat of the sharecroppers.

Soon the service was over and the people greeted neighbors. They drifted out of the church like leaves across a park, the women's clothes rustling at their knees. Virginia Mae and Gabe were coming out of the church together when they spotted the truck filled with her furniture—a rocking chair, a table, a chiffonade—and squatted beside the truck, a man who stared at them all as if their expressions held no emotion for him. He was dark-faced and his eyebrows ran together.

She turned to Gabe, "I guess Lee is ready to go. I jest wanted to tell you, Mr. Gabe, how much we all like you." The words were dry and broken as the wind's winter leaves. "We don't have to worry about what you thinking about us, like as if you was family and all and had always lived with

us....You're a good, easy-going man, and I just want to tell you how much we all keer about you. Norma Jean and George, they say the same." It was hard for her to say, and now that it was over with, she turned away from him to greet her husband.

The refrain repeated itself to him: the very most I can do is not to show all I care for her or to indicate that I would take her from this place.

He was standing there wishing to

God he had hugged her, thinking she would have probably met the moment as purely and quietly as he meant it, when the girl climbed into the old pale-blue truck. The truck ripped itself loose from the yard. First gear and then second gear meshed. The family moved out into the road. They waved and she waved, and then her hand dropped limply. She turned her hat straight ahead, and the family stood disconsolate and emptied in the sun.

Gabriel thought he saw something drop from the truck. A message, a letter, something?

The children were again gathered in the car faceless, and the grownups were leaning without movement against it when Gabe returned. In the upturned palm of his hands he carried a doll like a drowned body and tried to brush the dust from its eyes and mouth.



LIFE OF ARTISTS

The sun through Vienna's Rathaus provides
glancing light for the concert in the park.
The evening crowd gathers in still dusk and an old woman slides
stiffly to each island, passing programs with her spotted hands,
her shoulders pinched and drawn, her eyes scowling and dark
behind thick, rimless glasses. The gray strands

of hair match her plain sweater and her wrinkled face
banks the embers of still-burning love.
The music begins—"Eine Nacht in Venedig." With a trace
of softening her manner moves like hard clay
beneath the caresses of the sculptor. The next piece
"Kunstlerleben." The calm air of closing day

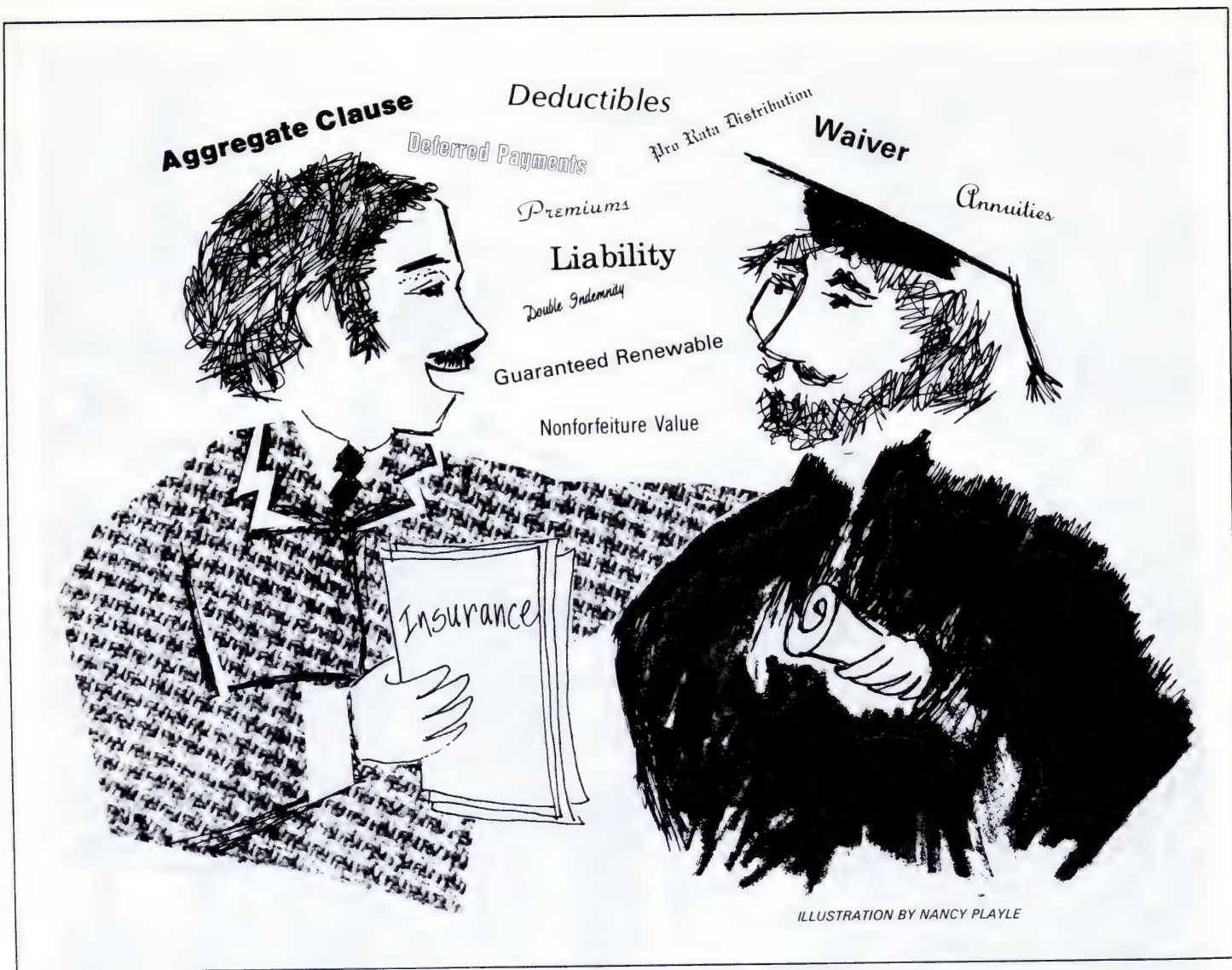
crackles with excitement and the beauty of lilting
sounds lifts the listeners from themselves
with gentle, probing hands. She is dancing—
They are startled in recognition—before the gazebo,
waltzing with a partner who solely delves
deeply into her memory. She is smiling, aglow,

entranced at once by her imagination
and the soothing voices of strings, and her fragile
shoulders swing easily in a gentle sensation.
The music ends like her passing dream
and she is gone like a sound, a stringed syllable,
lost in the evening crowd until her next dance.

—Jim Warren



PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILL DICKEY



the ins & outs of insurance: how not to get chunked by the rock

BY JAN COOPER

Getting an aggressive call from your friendly neighborhood insurance agent—or more likely from several friendly neighborhood insurance agents—is as much a part of the college graduation ritual as receiving a diploma. As soon as a student is classified a senior and often as soon as he earns junior status or marries, he immediately becomes fair game for a whole pack of well-trained salesmen, both scrupulous and unscrupulous, all eager to get his name on that dotted

line. John C. Hendricks, president of Auburn-Opelika Association of Life Underwriters, is aware of at least sixteen local agents who sell insurance to college students primarily, and he suspects that there actually may be twice that many.

Unfortunately, most college students aren't ready for the onslaught. Many students can barely handle their simplest finances, much less choose exactly the right amount and type of insurance to meet their personal needs. Therefore many people make unwise choices. In fact, AU Student Develop-

ment lawyer Don Adams estimates that five to eight students consult him on life insurance problems each month.

Most of the problems result from student ignorance confronted by refined marketing techniques. Insurance agents use sophisticated sales methods, and understandably so: theirs is a highly competitive business dependent upon their ability to convince a large number of people that they must be protected against unlikely personal catastrophe. Some insurance companies are content to rely

on long-standing good reputations, word of mouth, and general media advertising to attract customers. Many companies, however, are more assertive; they regularly ask customers to suggest the names of friends who they feel might need insurance. Less fastidious agencies use mass mailings or handouts distributed in housing complexes and sometimes token gifts as come-ons. Methods like harassing a person by repeatedly calling him until he agrees to see the agent are generally considered unethical by respectable insurance agents.

Occasionally you can't help but admire an insurance agent's gall. I'll never forget the disgust on the face of Thom Botsord, 1973-74 editor of the *Circle*, when he showed me his first letter to the editor. The letter, still preserved in *Circle* correspondence files, was from a local insurance agent who began by complimenting Thom on the *Circle's* display of the "the finer art side of Auburn students." Somewhere in its middle, however, the letter abruptly twisted into a request for a meeting with Thom to discuss his life insurance needs.

Such a blatant attempt to bamboozle by appealing to a person's vanity is amusingly obvious; other attempts to manipulate are more subtle. Many agents rely on the emotional aspects of insurance—distressing thoughts of serious illness, extensive property damage, or sudden death—to amplify their sales pitches. Also, college students are often struggling to establish their adulthood, and therefore are particularly attracted to the sense of responsible maturity which owning an insurance policy represents. Like any good salesmen, insurance agents use personal charisma (personality!) to sway potential clients.

My favorite trick is the Insurance Euphemism. I once listened to a smooth-talker make his pitch on the telephone for twenty minutes without once letting that telltale word *i* — — — — — *e* slip out. I suppose there's nothing really wrong with pretty or dignified words used to make other words more digestible; hardly a television commercial could be filmed without them. But it is imperative that any potential

insurance customer know exactly what he is buying.

The insurance profession is trying to improve its image by condemning practices such as misleading customers. The Auburn-Opelika Association of Life Underwriters is an affiliate of the National Association of Life Underwriters and subscribes to the National Association's Code of Ethics. According to John Hendricks, 87 out of the approximately 150 insurance agents in the Auburn-Opelika area are members of the local association and are thereby subject to the discipline of its Ethics Committee. If a member is accused of defying the Code of Ethics, the Ethics Committee investigates the situation and, by trial before the Committee, decides whether or not the accused is guilty. Depending upon the seriousness of the offense, the Ethics Committee can informally admonish, formally reprimand, or temporarily or permanently expel a guilty agent from membership in the association. In addition, the Ethics Committee refers any case of disobeying the Alabama State Code to the State Department of Insurance. The Auburn-Opelika Association of Life Underwriters urges anyone with serious complaints against a member to write them (P.O. Box 160, Opelika, Alabama 36801) and state his case. It is to the association's advantage to weed out unscrupulous members who damage the credibility of all. Unfortunately, an agent need not belong to the association to sell insurance; therefore expulsion from the association does not necessarily protect unwary consumers.

Despite the risks in buying insurance (perhaps some enterprising company will offer "insurance insurance" one day), it is a valuable protection against unexpected financial hardship. Medical costs are so high that any injury or an illness much worse than a common cold can bankrupt an ordinary person. Crime and highway accident rates are so high and expensive they too can quickly destroy a person's savings. Saving itself is difficult for many people, tempted as they are by the high value modern American culture places on conspicuous consumption.

Dr. Charles P. Edmonds, an assistant professor of Accounting and Finance who teaches a course in personal finances and who frequently hears insurance horror stories, emphasizes that each person has unique insurance needs. Take my case, for example. I am a healthy, twenty-two-year-old woman, footloose and fancy free, the daughter of vigorous middle-class parents. Because I plan to enter graduate school in the fall and am still classified a student, my parents and I have agreed that the most economical way to cover my health and auto insurance risks is to keep me included in their policies. I have no need for life insurance because the only financial hardship my sudden death would cause anyone would be my burial expenses, which I think my family could handle.

If I were not remaining in school or if I were not able to depend on my parents, I probably would need at least health and automobile insurance. If I owned valuable property, such as an expensive stereo system, but did not own my home, I could purchase tenant homeowner's insurance to cover the risks of theft, fire, etc. Of course, homeowner's insurance would be available if I did own my own house.

It is relatively easy to see the advantages of health, automobile and property insurance. Many Auburn people were particularly impressed with the advantages of property insurance during our recent tangle with hurricane weather. Often a customer goes to an agency to obtain these services rather than waiting to be approached by an agent in search of a client.

Life insurance is a more crowded can of worms. Insurance agents do seek out customers for this service, hence the danger of being talked into something you don't need is greater. To return to our hypothetical situation, were I on my own and still single and childless or even married to someone who could support himself adequately without my paycheck, I would not need life insurance because no one would be financially affected by my death. However, should I marry a man unable to sustain a comfortable quality of life on his own means, or should I

become responsible for the expenses of any other person like an older relative or a child, life insurance might be more necessary.

Two main types of life insurance usually appeal most to young adults like me: whole life and term insurance. Any life insurance is bought to protect a named beneficiary against financial hardship caused by premature death of the person insured. A customer buys whole life insurance by making regular payments, "premiums," for a specified number of years. If he does not die first, the customer may cash in his policy and receive either a lump sum or monthly payments from the company when he reaches a certain age, usually 60 or 65. Hence a whole life policy is an investment as well as insurance.

Insurance agents frequently urge college students to buy a special type of whole life insurance policy featuring a buy-now-pay-later ("deferred") payment plan which allows the student to purchase a sizeable policy but postpone paying premiums for up to two years. Instead, the policy holder signs a promissory note which he is expected to pay off after he has graduated and is earning big money in

a new job. Agents emphasize the utility of a whole life policy as a sort of forced savings plan, pointing out that many people find it extremely difficult to save voluntarily, but policy premiums force the customer to invest money in a policy which can insure and accumulate savings at the same time. Whole life insurance policies can also be arranged with what the industry calls "guaranteed purchase options" which enable the consumer to obtain additional amounts of insurance at times like the birth of a child or at certain ages without proving "insurability" (in other words, despite loss of good health).

Whole life insurance does have its disadvantages, the first of which is its high premiums. Secondly, if one does survive to collect at retirement age, inflation of the national economy may have devalued the investment as well.

Term insurance, on the other hand, is life insurance bought at relatively low rates for a specific amount of time. It never pays unless the insured person dies; therefore it has none of the savings advantages of whole life insurance. But its premium rates are much lower and easier for someone with a small budget to pay. Some peo-

ple purchase term insurance when they obtain mortgages, arranging the term to expire when the mortgage has been paid so that their family will not be left with their debts in the case of their unexpected death. I suspect that if I did want life insurance right now, I would choose term insurance.

Nevertheless, everyone's needs and values are different. Perhaps the only advice applicable to every insurance customer is shop around, figure out exactly what *you* need, and be absolutely sure you know what you're buying. Two books in the Auburn University library which discuss competently in laymen's language what to look for in any type of insurance policy are *Am I Covered? Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Insurance But Didn't Know How to Ask* by Gayle E. Richardson (Unified College Press, 1973) and *Insurance and Risk* by Ralph H. Wherry and Monroe Newman (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964). If possible, you would be wise to consult a lawyer who can help you sort through all the contract jargon. In any case, don't let someone talk you into something you don't want or don't need.



SUNDAY

Roll into the garage,
jump out, snag your stockings.
Call to the dogs,
climb the steps to the porch.
Swinging screen door whines slowly
then slams,
Smell of thick roast floats kindly
to meet you.
Kick off your shoes,
pick up the funnies
As Oral Roberts prays his
last prayer
And the Jesus drains slowly
away.

—Susan Bassett

SOLITAIRE

There has yet to be a jewel invented,
So rare as the icon of insanity.
Balanced high on polished prongs—
A solitaire, a starburst stone
The gem glistens, invitingly,
In all of its twisted symmetry
In the wee, gray moments of morn.

—Nancy Strachan

MARY LOU BLUE

Open up!
Let me in!
I won't disrupt
I want to smell
The luring fragrance
Of your sin

I want to see
The golden symmetry
Of your perfidy

And share with you
The black and blue
Marks on your face and hands
And the nauseating
Burnt-in brands
That mar your body
Heavily
From head to toe
I want to know

About the death you keep
Alone
So that silently together
We may weep

And find the meaning
To your screaming

I want to taste your blood
And then brood
About the pain you've felt
And meted out
And know the truth
That courses through your body's
Rivers of discontent
All hell-bent

And gently fondle the moaning
That is in your bones
Asking of your groans
The key
To all your agony

And maybe then
On some true real height
Polished lightly by the night
I can but see you
As I was meant to see
And die half-giddy
And of fright

—Tom Snelling

TO A WOMAN BEGGING IN A STREET OF SHIRAZ

Oh woman, old woman
shriveled up like
carcass of a dog
drying in the sun
over rocky bottom
of empty riverbed.

The street is a river
the hot concrete
where you sit
shriveled up, knees drawn
under blackness of your veil

The street is dry
like the river
great clouds of dust
carried along in rivulets
of hot air
Tumbleweeds roll along
the pavement
roll relentlessly to
who-knows-where.

While you sit and
watch with your great eye
black as the shadow
of your veil
dark as pools
where drown great fishes
with scaly heads
with shreds of human flesh
in jagged teeth.

I drop the coin
into the shriveled palm
of your gnarled hand
a silvery coin
inscribed with the sign
of our degradation
This gift to you from me

I who walk with
healthy strides under
the orange sun
free as the splotches of color
some careless painter
left on the wall behind you.

I give you this coin
wishing it were more than a coin
wishing it were a key
to fit the hole in the center
of your great eye
To unlock the sliver of light
I see beyond the shadows.

—Heleni Pedersoli



ILLUSTRATION BY NANCY ELLIS

DARK SHAPES RISING

FICTION BY JIM SHOFFNER

Justin Geoffrey, *The People of the Monolith* (New York, 1923):

Behind the Veil, what gulfs of Time and Space?

What blinking, moving things to blast the sight?

I shrink before a vague, colossal Face

Born in the mad immensities of Night.

The Associated Press, 22 December 1979:

NEW YORK (AP) — French director Corman Abbe' has joined with Tartarus Productions to film "People of the Monolith," based on the poetry of Justin Geoffrey. The big-budgeted production is scheduled to begin June 2.

Location sequences will be filmed in Britain and Hungary, with interiors to be shot at the Tartarus studios in Hollywood. An international cast of performers will be recruited.

"People of the Monolith" is described as an expressionistic story of mystery and terror. Abbe' will produce, direct, and write the screenplay for the film.

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Cinemacabre (vol. III, no. 2), Spring 1980:

THE PRIEST CONFESSES: AN INTERVIEW WITH CORMAN ABBE'

His admirers call him The Priest.

In the last three years Corman Abbe' (abbe' is a French clerical title, hence the nickname) has shocked and mystified cinema audiences with his darkly evocative adaptations of the world's classic macabre verse. His private studio has turned Shelley's

"Ozymandias" and Poe's "City in the Sea" into celluloid visions of haunting beauty unequalled — according to many viewers — in the history of filmic art.

The man behind it all is known equally well as a unique personality. Standing six feet seven inches, Abbe' is completely bald and over his blind left eye wears a fabulous ornament — an eyepatch of black onyx set in a close-fitting circle of fashioned gold. Born in 1917 of a French peasant girl and an unknown American soldier, Abbe' came to the United States as a seaman in the early Depression years and was granted citizenship in 1939. He served in the Pacific during World War II and returned with the beginnings of wealth—a footlocker and duffel bags crammed with ritual masks, sacrificial robes, and lava-carved totems from the islands. With these he set up a small curio shop in New York and, with time, made enough money to open two more locations. In 1955 Abbe' shaved his head and became one of the last Westerners to travel in Tibet before the Chinese sealed its borders. In Tibet he acquired two genuine *yeti* scalps — later sold to private collectors for undisclosed sums — but lost an eye at the hands of a cruel Red Guard officer named Tsung Li-Ho (the same Tsung Li-Ho who is now premier). Abbe' fashioned the famous onyx eyepatch for himself and in 1962 sold

his curio shops and returned to his native France, studying filmmaking at his Linne' estate until the release of *Ozymandias* in 1977. Two years later *City in the Sea* cemented his reputation as a genius of "cinema fantastique." He opened his house to admirers and researchers, for within its walls was the largest collection of fantastic and macabre films outside the Chaney Foundation archives — tens of thousands of films dating back to the 1890's, including such priceless items as the notorious Argentine "snuff" movies and the only surviving color print of Hitchcock's *Psycho*.

Late last year Abbe' announced plans for his third film, *People of the Monolith*, based on the poetry of Justin Geoffrey. He also announced that a major studio, Tartarus Productions, will finance the venture. We visited The Priest at his palatial estate-museum at Linne' and secured this interview...

Cinemacabre: Mr. Abbe', you have privately financed each of your previous films. Why are you joining with a large commercial studio to produce this one?

Abbe': There are two reasons. The first is that *People of the Monolith* will be an adaptation of an entire volume of connected verse, and the film will thus require a much larger production budget than *Ozymandias* and *City in the Sea*, which were adaptations of

short single works. The second reason is that the studio will ensure that the film receives the proper publicity and distribution, both of which I, alone, could handle only in a limited way.

Cinemacabre: Why have you chosen to adapt an entire volume of verse?

Abbe': *People of the Monolith* is a cycle of poems so delicately interconnected and interwoven that it would be an insult to the poet's memory if only a portion were filmed out of context. Justin Geoffrey, the poet, did not compose his powerful verse to be sampled in single units.

Cinemacabre: Can you tell us something about him?

Abbe': Geoffrey was a poet — a genius — in the Baudelairean mold. He experienced a series of frightening dreams as a child and began writing poetry, inspired by the dreams, at the age of eleven. His only two collections, *People of the Monolith* and *Out of the Old Land*, are long out of print, but bits of his work can be found quoted by the fantasists Howard and Lovecraft. In 1921 Geoffrey visited the Black Stone in Hungary, and died a lunatic five years later. A terrible waste.

Cinemacabre: What about his poetry?

Abbe': The poetry of Justin Geoffrey is exclusively macabre, dealing with dark gods, forbidden lands, and nightmarish dream-visions from man's past. He was greatly influenced by a German work called *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*, which catalogued ancient cult-worships of a particularly grisly sort.

Cinemacabre: You mentioned that Geoffrey's verse concerned "visions from man's past." What do you mean by this?

Abbe': Well, Jung called it the racial unconscious, but whatever the name, it is nothing less than a feeling of psychic familiarity — kinship, if you will — with forms and shapes that could have had their origins only in the distant, early stages of our evolution. Geoffrey knew how to introduce and manipulate such shapes so that the reader experiences sudden shocks of recognition, or sometimes feelings of vague uneasiness, at things which have no existence in the modern world. These alien things create stirrings of fear and uneasiness because they are

buried in our unconscious minds, left over from forgotten ages as psychic, memory-triggered alarms.

Cinemacabre: Alarms warning us of what?

Abbe': Warning us not to remember too much — not to remember that we weren't always human.

Cinemacabre: Why should this memory be dangerous?

Abbe': Because most people can't cope with it. Most people simply cannot accept that their own ancestors, however many millions of years ago, passed the nights reveling before strange altar-fires and eating the brains of their fallen comrades. When forced to accept this by memory-jogging images dredged up from the past, the realization is often too much to bear. The insane asylums of the world are filled with crippled minds that know more of man's evolutionary past than you and I, if we are lucky, ever will.

Cinemacabre: Will these "memory-jogging" images come through in your film?

Abbe': That's hard to say. The rule in imaginative cinema is that whatever can be written can be filmed, but the question here is whether it *will* be filmed. There are limits.

Cinemacabre: Limits of taste, of shock impact?

Abbe': Of shock impact, yes. Movies like *Psycho* and *The Exorcist*, and stage plays like *Marat/Sade*, gained fame with their ability to raise an audience's hackles, but truly deep psychological shocks have so far been unobtainable in mass-media films. It is true that the viewing of certain films has induced labor spasms in pregnant women and has caused emotional damage to already unbalanced persons, but these instances are rare. Even such "sensory enhancement" gimmicks as 3-D and Sensurround, while promising even greater — though artificial — audience involvement, have failed to cause significant psychological traumas in the viewing audience.

Cinemacabre: Are you saying, then, that such psychological traumas may be impossible to produce via the cinema?

Abbe': No, what I am saying is merely that it hasn't been done before — not

that it can't be done. Whether I will be able to achieve it will depend on several factors.

Cinemacabre: Such as ...?

Abbe': Such as technical feasibility, the willingness of the studio to cooperate, the problems of censorship and rating-code restrictions, and, ultimately, whether I decide to even try.

Cinemacabre: Do you think you will want to try?

Abbe': I really don't know. Threatening an audience's collective psyche can be a dangerous thing. We don't begin shooting till June, so there is still time to chart a different course for the film. The only definite thing I can say at this point is that *People of the Monolith* will be worthy of its literary precursor. On points other than that, I can only advise you to wait for the film's release — probably within three years.

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Cinemacabre (vol. III, no. 3), Summer 1980:

Editor:

I found your interview with Mr. Corman Abbe' (Spring '80) very enlightening, but wish to point out that Geoffrey's raving verse may not be a fit subject for a mass-media film production. Mr. Abbe', as quoted in the interview, seems to be aware of the psychologically destructive potential of his material, and this knowledge hopefully will refrain his directorial hand from creating a work so deeply charged that even his prodigious talents cannot control its effects.

It is not comforting to realize that the poet himself died screaming in a madhouse.

Magnon Sanderhan, Ph.D.
Miskatonic University

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The Associated Press, 24 June 1981:

STREGOICAVAR, Hungary (AP) — Three members of an American film crew were stabbed to death near here Tuesday night. Their alleged assailant died of a heart attack shortly afterward.

Cinematographer Mario Tosci is

believed to have murdered Louis Sheaffer, Timothy Blackmun and Armand Lund as they camped on a cliff above this small village.

Tosci and the three victims were members of an American movie crew filming "People of the Monolith" under director Corman Abbe'. They were stationed near the site of the Black Stone, an ancient basalt column, to watch over equipment left overnight for location filming this morning.

According to local authorities, Tosci at dawn entered the hotel where the rest of the crew slept and collapsed in the lobby. A clerk said Tosci had muttered incoherently of "dark shapes" rising from the Black Stone.

Abbe' and a party of crew members returned to the campsite and discovered the bodies.

Officials speculate that Tosci took advantage of his turn at watch and surprised the others while they slept. Each body had been stabbed repeatedly.

"We are all deeply shocked and saddened at the loss of our fellow workers," Abbe' said today, "but we do not expect this tragedy to drastically alter our production plans. We are still filming."

Abbe' added that he did not know what might have caused Tosci to kill the three men.

Production memo, Tartarus Productions, 10 September 1982:

FROM: Corman Abbe'

TO: Cast & Crew

Our work on *People of the Monolith* is almost completed. I have yet to supervise the editing and sound-effects dubbing, but for all practical purposes the film itself is finished.

The recent abolition of the American and British review boards has, as you know, greatly simplified these final stages.

The film's world premiere is scheduled for December 24, at the Palace Theatre in New York City. I have elected to forego the usual pre-screening for the critics; it is my belief that the reaction of the mass audience will be the best indicator of the film's merits.

Finally, and with the utmost sincerity, I wish to thank all of you for your cooperation in playing down the unfortunate incident in Stregocivar last summer. Had word gotten out that the bodies bore bite-marks and evidence of cannibalism, our entire film production might have been terminated.

Adieu, and best wishes—

Corman Abbe'

Opening titles, *People of the Monolith* (Tartarus Productions 1982):

TO ENHANCE YOUR ENJOYMENT OF
THIS FILM,

NO ONE WILL BE ADMITTED AFTER THE
FIRST FIVE MINUTES.

Tartarus Productions presents
Corman Abbe's

PEOPLE OF THE MONOLITH

The New York Times, 25 December 1982:

MOVIE THEATRE COLLAPSES; OVER 1,300 FEARED KILLED

Midtown Manhattan's 55-year-old Palace Theatre collapsed Friday night, burying an estimated 1,300-1,500 moviegoers under tons of rubble.

Police officials said today there is little hope of finding survivors among the debris.

Estimates of the number of patrons, who were attending the world premiere of "People of the Monolith," ranged from a ticket-sales count of 1,383 to a seating-capacity total of 1,500. The latter figure includes guest patrons who were not sold tickets.

New York City Police Commissioner Alden McAllen said today the theatre's management was recently warned of weak ceiling beams, and that this structural flaw may have caused the collapse.

Emergency rescue work was still under way at 9 o'clock this morning. At least 790 bodies have been pulled from the wreckage.

Rescue efforts were hampered by a heavy snowfall and sub-freezing temperatures.

According to police, no emergency

call was received from the Palace Theatre, possibly indicating that all inside were killed or disabled before such a call could be placed.

Several local merchants, police said, called the precinct fire station about 8:45 p.m. to report a noise resembling a bomb blast. When firemen arrived they discovered the theatre's roof had collapsed. The outer walls were still standing.

Firemen said there was no sign of life from the theatre when they arrived.

Police and firemen evacuated the area and erected roadblocks, then began searching for bodies early this morning.

"We can only be thankful the gas lines and electrical wiring didn't start a fire," Commissioner McAllen said, "or else we might've lost a whole block or more."

Several celebrities and public officials were said to have been attending the movie at the time of the disaster, but their names had not been released at press time.

Corman Abbe', the director of the film, was reportedly in Los Angeles to promote a scheduled premiere there next week. He could not be reached for comment.

Supplement to coroner's report, N.Y.P.D., 30 December 1982:

CONFIDENTIAL

In addition to the preliminary conclusions given in the official report (PALACE THEATRE/12-24-82), your attention is requested in reference to two facts: (1) all the bodies thus far examined display signs of severe shock and massive cardiac arrest, which appear to have occurred coincident with, or possibly prior to, the time given for the collapse of the theatre; (2) a majority of the bodies thus far examined bear semi-circular puncture wounds — similar to those produced by human teeth — as if the patrons, at some point, had attacked each other in a cannibalistic frenzy.

It is respectfully recommended that a medico-psychiatric panel be ap-

pointed in order to further investigate these matters.

The Associated Press, 31 December 1982:

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Corman Abbe', the director whose "People of the Monolith" was being premiered at

the time of New York's Palace Theatre disaster, has announced he will withdraw the film from public distribution.

Abbe' said today he plans instead to provide the film at a private screening for Chinese Premier Tsung Li-Ho next month.

"I met Tsung several years ago in Tibet," Abbe' said, "and I feel I have a sort of personal debt to repay him."

Abbe' gave no reason for the film's public withdrawal....



A DREAM OF RAT-EYES

Full of dread
He read one day
That many commercial meats
That he had eaten
Were part rat shit
And he realized
With aching eyes
That he had lived for years
With the sounds of rats
So ephemeral in his ears
Had felt their smells
Swell in his body
Knowing in essence
That a million burning rat-essences
Flowed in his veins
Spinning through his mind
Like unkind vapors
Making him see
In a blazing rat-ecstasy
A land where the rats were free,
Had wings,
And flew in the air, singing
Sad, sweet, silver songs
Songs forever bringing
To their senses the taste of garbage
And of their past
Of the thirsting after
A neighbor's old-age
Hemorrhage
Of the carrion feasts
That were so good to their beastly natures.
As they sauntered carelessly
And effortlessly through the trees
They laughed wildly at the sprees
Of a lost life
Where they had lived on death
And the offal of disease
And had revelled easily
In all disgusting things;
And then would mark with empty pleasure
The measure of their rise
To reach the skies

—Tom Snelling

ON THE WAY TO THE THEATER

They say you were lost
on the way to the theater
and that you never found
your way back to reality
when the play was over.
All too soon the theater was empty
the curtain was down
and everyone was gone
except for you.

After the adventure was over,
the excitement gone,
your friends grew tired
of hearing your lines and your songs
and applauding your talent.
One by one, they walked away
shaking their heads sadly,
until I was the last one left,
the sole survivor backstage,
wondering somberly
where it would all end.

Finally I, too, grew tired of waiting
for someone I didn't even know anymore.
Someone whose eyes had grown cold
whose laughter was hollow
and whose permanent smile had been sold
for a counterfeit rainbow.

We lost you forever
and we didn't even know
until we were halfway home
that you'd sold the soul
you had wanted us to save
for a two a penny part
on the way to the theater.

—Leslie Cost

HAIKU

Autumn winds unfold,
Aging leaves shrivel and die
—Dirges under foot.

—A. Charles Murphy

ELEMENTAL

the rain
in its perversities
hurls passions
into torments of tornadoes

—Janice Bickham

ATTENDANT NIGHT

i place my shoes
along the water's edge
thick mists spreading
in the closing night
early morning stars
fading from sight
rotting posts rise
from the lake like ghosts
my bare feet quite careful
in the mud and grass nearby

knotty trees clothed in wet mosses
their naked roots clinging
water dripping down
where they dip into the water
one step
mountains suddenly hush
in my care to startle
sparkling ripples rush away
jarring the reflected lunar image
as i turn

and let my soul lie quiet

—Joseph Cotten



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID BRADFORD



ILLUSTRATION BY KAREN MAYHEW

BYE BYE BICENTENNIAL

BY J.P. KAETZ

I know I run the risk of being lynched by the Daughters of the American Revolution or the John Birch Society, but I am willing to incur the danger: I wish to state very emphatically that I am sick of the Bicentennial celebration. For the last year and a half we, the American public, have been subjected to Bicentennial rhetoric, sales, gimmicks, commercials, songs, and restorations.

Stores have been peddling everything from patriotic platewarmers to red, white, and blue toilet tissue. (In all honesty, it seems a little un-American to use toilet paper which has every square printed up as a miniature flag.) One chain of stores is putting out a Bicentennial music box which has a small cast-iron minuteman on top of it. The minuteman sings "God Bless America" and then wounds the nearest moving object, usually its owner.

Many of the commercial gimmicks have led me to the theory that the older stores, such as Sears, are selling all the back stock they had left over from the Centennial celebration. Why else would they be offering red, white, and

blue buggy whips and coin sets commemorating all the presidents up to Ulysses S. Grant?

Among other things that I am somewhat less than thrilled with are the new Bicentennial fashions. In fact, disgusted to the point of nausea might be a more apt description of my reaction. I mean, what can you wear with red, white, and blue socks except red and white striped pants and a blue shirt? (I tried it once; every R.O.T.C. man on campus saluted when I walked by. I burned the clothes.)

Not to be outdone by the corporations, every town in the country is restoring a "Bicentennial Building" for the celebration. If the town is only a few years old, it can import a building from the ACME Bicentennial Building Company, Lexington, Mass. My hometown, which is relatively small, is restoring a Bicentennial Outhouse (George Washington sat here), complete with a 1776 Sears-Roebuck catalog and a Bicentennial corncob. The total cost of the project is fifteen dollars and forty-five cents.

Even *Time* magazine, a staid old American institution, got into the act with a special 1776 edition. It featured interviews with all the great patriotic

heroes such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. (It mystifies me how they got the interviews; all those people are either dead or living in Argentina.) I can't wait until the *National Enquirer* puts out a similar issue. It will have headlines like "Roving Reporter Analyzes Benjamin Franklin's Garbage," "Is Tommy Jefferson Really A Bi-Sexual," and "Big George Washington: Does He Have a Thing Going With Betsy Ross?" *Reader's Digest* could put out a special issue with features such as "How to Get More Out of Your Carriage" and "Opium: The New Wonder Drug."

Despite my adverse reaction to all this Bicentennial gimmickry, I am not totally unpatriotic. In fact, I plan on doing a little celebrating myself. On July Fourth, I'm going to strip naked and paint my entire body red, white, and blue. After reinforcing myself with a pint of bourbon, I will ride down the middle of Birmingham on a Harley-Davidson singing "You're a Grand Old Flag" in the key of C. After all, who would have the audacity to arrest an American flag on the 200th birthday of our country?





ILLUSTRATION BY SAYTE HOLLAND

The Intervention of Ralph

FICTION BY JOHN WILLIAMS

In the mid-afternoon Grayson turned his wide car down the narrow drive. From the porch of the old house Helen waved as Pearl, beside her, squinted through the smoke of her cigarette and leafed through an advertising circular from the mail. Grayson parked beside Pearl's old Chevy, the only other car, and threw his remaining minnows into the weeds around the tallest oak. The April afternoon was bright and quiet. The grass in the yard needed mowing and the azaleas held only brown sagging blooms. Grayson was tired, and decided not to lug his gear upstairs. A group of sparrows scattered before him as he trudged through the shade towards the porch.

"Catch anything Grayson?" Helen asked as he took his mail. Pearl snapped the pages of her paper and ignored him.

"Nope—kind of slow," he answered.

Grayson opened his only letter and glanced over it as Helen scrutinized him boldly. Grayson always smiled—a modest smile that wanted no argument. Helen loved his smile; she thought it was pleasant. Helen liked pleasantries. She liked Grayson. She always felt comfortable near him; he was so compliant and agreeable. She continued watching him attentively as Pearl took a last drag on her cigarette and threw it awkwardly towards the sidewalk.

"Who's it from, Grayson?" Helen asked.

"My boy."

"Doing all right?"

"Says everything's fine."

"Uh," Pearl grunted and threw down her paper. She sat back in her chair with a scowl and scratched at a rough place on her knobby knuckle.

"Well, that's nice," Helen said pleasantly.

Grayson, with two heart attacks behind him, his wife buried only a year, did not work, but drew a monthly check like all the other tenants. He had lived in the leaning, partitioned old house since his wife's death and had grown extremely fond of only Helen. Gentle, pleasant Helen. Pearl especially annoyed Grayson; she was surly and rude and selfish. To Grayson, who smiled and faithfully avoided feelings of uneasiness, Pearl was a frowning source of discomfort.

Soft-spoken, pleasant-natured Grayson puttered about carefully and usually tried to fill his days with activities. He enjoyed fishing and refused to admit it was a strain. He worked diligently at crossword puzzles and detective articles, and used to tie his own flies and build shelves and cultivate flowers. But even though he was an adaptive man easily contented, he still missed the nearness of his wife. She had unrepiningly cared for him until she had died of a stroke without the least warning. Grayson also missed his son, recently gone, married, and five hundred miles away. Grayson approached the hours of his days cautiously and slowly. He still grew a few flowers which he sometimes presented to Helen. He wistfully tried, especially on warm afternoons, to defeat the malaise that lingered in the dark of the damp yard, around the peeling corners of the lifeless house, and in the souls of all the defeated, shuffling tenants who, like him, had nothing to do. He was bored and lonely.

Helen knew Grayson was bored and lonely and it grieved her, for beyond Pearl, and poor old Mrs. Eddings the landlady, he was her only friend. And such a nice one too, tall and friendly, who often thought of her in little ways. It pained Helen's simple heart that she,

unimaginative and crippled, was unable to ease his boredom and answer his loneliness, that she was unable to offer him any diversion from the drudgery. She smiled, and conversed merrily, but knew not how to capture Grayson's heart. Helen was not sure she understood boredom, and she frequently reminded Pearl that little was needed to make her happy. Pearl could not conceive of anyone sitting motionlessly for hours on a porch without growing disgusted with the world, and Helen's chattering annoyed her. Helen knew she sometimes annoyed Pearl, but she never tried to do more than make clear to Pearl that a quiet day on the porch, rocking and chatting, ought to be pleasant. Helen had known Pearl for six years, and knew her well. She was aware of Pearl's tendency to complain without reason. Pearl, near sixty, was considerably older than Helen and often spoke in praise of her long dead husband who had metamorphosed through the years from a no good grouch to a saint. Helen herself had never married. Pearl found little to enjoy in living, a process which she took every opportunity to point out to Helen was meaningless. But Helen tolerated her friend's peevishness and often explained to Grayson, who did not enjoy wondering what life meant, that Pearl, beneath her gruffness, was a good person.

Grayson was kind and forgiving, and held no grudge against Pearl, even though she ignored him as he took off his reading glasses and slipped the letter into his pocket.

Helen had big news. There was a new tenant in the house, an event which always generated interest. He had moved in that morning. Helen had looked forward to telling Grayson all day.

"Guess what, Grayson?" she said.

"What?"

"Mrs. Eddings rented that other apartment."

"She did?" Grayson said. A slight ripple of excitement tingled through him. He smiled. "We got a new neighbor?"

"A no good," Pearl said.

"He's nice as he can be. But he only had one little suitcase—must be all he has. He don't have much money."

"He ain't got *no* money," Pearl corrected. "He ain't paid a dime's rent yet."

"And Mrs. Eddings let him? He must be a nice fella."

"He's a Talker," Pearl said. "Slicked his way out. It ain't fair to us who pay."

"Now Pearl," Helen said, "he said he had a big deal coming in. He said he'd have money in a day or two."

"Sure he will," Pearl growled. "Big plans. He's a bum."

Grayson's excitement and curiosity mounted as he slowly climbed the narrow stairs. He paused at the top and caught his breath. The other door was closed and all was quiet inside except for the muffled humming of a fan. Grayson saw the new garbage can and noted the yellow towel and bar of soap in the bathroom. Be kind of nice to have some new blood, he thought.

Grayson bolted awake in his chair at the sound. A double-edged pain of noise: a shrill whistle and a charging locomotive. Every inch of the walls vibrated. Grayson felt razors scraping along the nerves inside his ears. A second of near hysteria passed. The sound stopped.

Grayson sat breathing heavily, trying to calm himself. His heart pounded and fluttered like a frightened bird. Another moment passed. A knock rattled the door.

A grinning man in his mid-forties stood confidently on the threshold with a red device in his hands. He was lean, but it was the leanness of a lone animal. His jawline was tight and sharp. Old-fashioned eyeglasses rested on his narrow nose, framing small dark eyes. Grayson looked at the man curiously. He wore a tee shirt, and baggy gray pants. His hair was grayish black and groomed. The grin that was

spread across his face was enthralling.

"Grayson?" the man said, offering his hand. "Call me Ralph. Pleasure knowing ya. Hey pard, sorry about the racket." Ralph laughed, inspecting Grayson. "Kind of loud, I know. But hell, pal, if there's a fire you gonna want to hear about it, are you with me?"

Grayson looked puzzledly at the small gadget.

"Watch this, friend," Ralph said and took a drag on his cigarette. He blew the smoke towards the gadget and immediately it again belched its noise. Grayson shuddered.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Ralph laughed, stepping inside. "Now tell me you couldn't hear *that*!"

It was almost five o'clock, and Grayson offered Ralph coffee.

"Not a bad place overall," Ralph observed as he settled into the sofa. "Seen better, seen worse. Not bad considering the money, but say—and now, I don't mean to sound out of line—but don't you think the old lady's asking a bit too much for it? Now don't get me wrong—it's a fine place, just fine. Heck, pal, it's a roof over your head, ain't it? But—well, Miami Hilton it ain't, do you follow? He, ha!"

"Well, it's comfortable," Grayson said defensively.

"Why hell's bells, course it is!" Ralph answered quickly. "Top notch! And about the old lady—good old gal. First rate old cuss! Little tight maybe, but heck, I suppose she's seen an old drifter or two like me. Been took a time or two, I imagine. Can't blame her—sweet old gal!"

"I've grown real fond of her," said Grayson. "She's getting old and has a hard time."

"Course she has! She can't watch over everything all the time. Got to admire her for taking it on herself like she does. Honest, Christian woman! Seen that the first minute. Say pard, what Line you in?"

"Oh, I'm disabled," Grayson explained. "Bad heart. Can't strain too much. Oh, I fish a little, and piddle around. I used to work for the city here. Got to sort of take it easy now though."

"Course you do! Got to take care of the old ticker. Now me, I'm a

Salesman, are you with me? Pal, I've spread every kind of insurance you've ever heard of, and several more you ain't, across five states! Started out in Oklahoma—had a big life insurance set up there. That's really my Line. Pal, I was at the top in those days—had it made! But, well heck pard, that's another story. Hate to bore you talking about me. Way I am though, being a Salesman. Oh, yes siree friend, I've peddled a little of everything. Vacuum cleaners, encyclopedias, cars, can openers, and Girl Scout cookies! You name it, friend, and old Ralph has took somebody's dollar bill somewhere for it! Been through five states and three wives, and here I am! Lived here long pal?"

"Been here about a year, I guess," Grayson said. "Lived in town all my life though."

"Settled in! That's just okay, pal, that's okay. Security—know where that next nickel's coming from. No siree, no flies on that strategy, pal. Now me, I'm a Salesman. Always moving around, do you follow? Ever done any selling?"

"No," said Grayson, "never tried my hand at that."

"Well, it's a shame. Lots of folks never tried—hell, glad they didn't too, friend, are you with me? Not enough room for everybody. Hell, best kept secret in the world—selling is the easiest way to turn a buck on this little playground down here. Not many folks know that. Hey listen, friend, it's only a hunch. I've been wrong a time or two, but damn, pal, if you don't have that Look. Tell it a mile off."

"Look? What Look?"

"Salesman Look! Bet you could sell a bikini to the old lady! Don't get me wrong, she's a good old cuss. Never tried to sell, huh?"

"No," Grayson said, thinking back. "I don't believe so . . ."

"Well heck pal, if you had, you'd still be at it, is my guess. Got that Look. Can't miss it."

Grayson was flattered, and smiled shyly. But he knew Salesmen had a way with double talk. "Aw come on now," he chuckled. "I couldn't sell a doughnut!"

"Don't you believe it pal! No siree. I got an eye for folks' strong points and weak points. Salesman's got to have it. Listen, now this is only a proposition, just batting the old ball around, making a million in my head, do you follow? But let me throw it out to you just the same, see what you think, okay?"

Grayson shrugged. "Well sure, okay. But really now, I don't think I could sell anything—I mean, if that's what you're thinking about."

"Just hear old Ralphie out pal, what ya say? Couldn't hurt."

"Well, all right."

"Now you've seen the goods. First rate alarm, and that's straight, pal, you've got my word on it. Matter of fact, it's the finest alarm on the market, if you'll let a Salesman do a little bragging. But I know what you're thinking! Not much call for fire alarms, you're saying to yourself. Don't really need 'em. Well pal, that's what the man said before he carried out his dead kid in his arms. Overcome by smoke. You know, it ain't the fire so much as the smoke, are you with me? Kills thousands every year. Got any kids, Grayson?"

"A son—in Tennessee."

"Well then, you see my point. Pal, these are just hard cold facts. No Salesman double talk or beating around the bush. Straight facts—not pretty but there they are. Now this little whatchamajig—hell, I don't know beans about gadgets any more than you, pal—but this baby's a dandy! Finest one made! Picks up on the smoke just like you saw. And cheap! Friend, the best policy is lay your cards right out on the table. It's a steal at \$39.95. Course you don't believe your ears! \$39.95! Pay for it on the Installment Plan. Works out to about fifty cents a day. A pack of cigarettes, a cold beer. Not too much to pay for your life, wouldn't you say friend? That's right, we ain't just talking about dollars and cents, we're talking about lives. It's a beaut!"

Grayson nodded carefully.

"Tell you what I've got up my sleeve, pal. Now take me. Look at me, what you see? Common old ugly-pussed fella trying to eat, that's all. Nothing special, nothing fancy. Just like you, or the man next door, or

anybody anywhere. Just an ordinary guy that's got to eat like everybody else. Now, how am I going to accomplish that? Well pal, that's an easy one. Here I am got a box full of the finest fire alarms made in the world, each one worth a hundred easy. But I'm letting them go dirt cheap and the man out there gets something money can't buy in return. And all I'm trying to do is make a couple of bucks for myself—to eat on. Nothing fancy. So, I'm letting them go for thirty bucks and some change! But pal, here's the best part. There's more in them than just an ordinary man's supper, do you follow? Pal, there's a million bucks in this! I'm talking about Volume. I've been selling ever since I could say the word—sold good products, sold bad ones—but *never* pal, has old Ralphie boy come across a gold mine like this! Sky's the limit! Once-in-a-lifetime set-up! Now pard, this is between you and me, but I'm going to put one of these thingamahickeys in every home and business in this town! Set up a network! I don't care who I get—black, white, young, old, healthy, little under the weather. Hippies, bums, man-off-the-street, it's all the same to me, friend. I've set up organizations like this in five states, but never with the solid gold goods like this baby. Foolproof! Old Ralph has declared war on fires! You and me running the show. What ya think?"

Grayson was cautious, but excited. Something new! But he was nervous. Now he saw what Pearl had meant that Ralph was a Talker. But, dang it, the slicker made sense. He smiled modestly. "Well, I don't know. I . . ."

"Don't decide yet! Think it over! It's a big step, I know. But look friend, I mean hell, I know you've got it made, I can see that. You keep yourself busy all the time. Little nap in the afternoon, maybe. But Jeez, you stay comfortable and keep busy! A man with hobbies, things going on all the time. Seeing about something here, working on a little project there. But listen—and you know me pal, I'm talking to you straight, that's the way I am—I don't even know if you'd have the time. But don't you ever wish you had a little something different to work at? Couple of hours a day, just something more

for fun than anything else, make a couple of bucks besides? Then one day, after you've got it all set up, just sit back and watch the green pour in? Sure you do! Who wouldn't? Well pal, here I am, knocking at your door. Don't run me out till you think it over. Listen, I've got a plan." Ralph paused and crushed out his cigarette. "There's a little club I go to. Already been to the one here. Met a fella. Nice man. Ed Rose, you know him?"

"Ed Rose Chevrolet?"

"Sure, that's him. First rate fella, break his back for you. We hit it off like brothers. He's a Salesman like us. Well pal, I ain't come right out with it yet, but I'm going to get him to promote me one of these bus things, you follow? Be our wagon. I've already got plans to set up his lot with alarms. He thinks like me; we see eye to eye. It's a sure thing! You follow?"

"Well," Grayson said, a little puzzled. "Do you think he'll do it?"

"Think? Hell, pal, I know it! That wagon'll be all over this town. One alarm in every home and business—course that's just Talk, you know that—but one in three is my goal, and that's straight. Million bucks, take my word!"

Grayson wanted to pinch himself for secretly contriving ways to spend the money. New boat—silly! New apartment—oh, quit your dreaming. Besides, what about Helen? Foolish to get worked up over some Salesman's plan. Probably wouldn't be more than fifty bucks or so a week. If that much. "Well," he said, "it sounds like quite a set-up."

"More green than you or me both has ever seen, friend. But heck, no use beating it to death the first day. Just thought I'd throw it out, let you mull it over. Oh, by the way, I talked to your neighbors downstairs this morning. Fine ladies! Super folks! That youngest one though, with the gimpy leg, you know her?"

"Helen?"

"That's her. Not bad looking, huh? Course she ain't Miss America, but heck pal, look at me. I ain't the best looking thing around. Nice lady though. Thinks like me, I can tell."

A tremor of suspicion jarred Grayson. He didn't like the sound of this. Just what in the dickens is he asking about Helen for, he wondered. Dadblame it, he didn't have any business with Helen. "We've been good friends a long time," he said firmly.

"Aw heck-fire, friend, just chewing the fat with you, just looking things over, you follow? It's always good to have friendly neighbors."

All that night, Grayson slept poorly, tousling his covers, sweating and turning. And, as usual whenever he had a bad night, it was mid-morning before he got up. Ralph and his plan flashed immediately into his mind.

Probably got a little too excited about it, he thought to himself. Probably nothing in it but Talk. And what did he mean asking about Helen? No reason to be bothering Helen. Be nice to have a little extra money, but Ralph didn't have any business with Helen.

When he went downstairs, Helen and Pearl were having a discussion on the porch.

"Guess what, Grayson?" Helen said. "Old Mrs. Cody's house got broke into last night."

"Mrs. Cody? You don't mean it?" Grayson said. "Down the street?"

"Yes. Happened some time last night. The police was there this morning."

"What'd they get?"

"I ain't sure what all."

"Cleaned her out, I'd bet on it," Pearl said. "She's an old fool—never locked up good enough. It's her own damn fault." Pearl herself did lock up well. Double locks on all doors and windows. She had a secret fear of being robbed and raped by a drunk black man. She didn't have much to lose, however, because she kept no valuables. Years before, her check had been robbed from the mailbox and after she had blamed every tenant in the house, including Helen, she had taken a post office box downtown. She drove to it every afternoon in her Chevy. Pearl was cheap, paranoid, and stingy, and none of the other tenants ever asked her for a favor. The other tenants, as a matter of fact, never

even spoke to her; they all, except Helen and Grayson, hated her and never asked for a ride in her car anymore.

"It was a bum or a nigger," Pearl growled. "Can't trust either kind. Like that bum Salesman. Can't trust him. Probably him that robbed the old owl down the street. What do you expect would happen if you up and married him? Be the end of you."

Helen blushed crimson red and stopped rocking. She dared not look at Grayson whose gentle smile faded abruptly into bewilderment.

"Oh Pearl," Helen said irritably. "Now you know I'm not going to do that."

"Marry?" Grayson sputtered. "Marry who? *Him*?"

"Yeah, him. That fast-talking, cheap Salesman." Pearl cackled wickedly. "First proposal she ever got. Heh, heh. Of course, she knows she'd be a fool to do it. But I don't know. Can't ever tell. Might up and do something stupid."

"Pearl, you know I wouldn't."

"He asked you to *marry* him?" Grayson said incredulously. "You mean it?"

Helen nodded shyly. "Oh, he's a nice old thing. He's just lonely I guess. Like us, maybe a little bit. He didn't know—I mean, of course I said no."

"But I can't believe he had the nerve!" Grayson spouted. "He doesn't have a thing to offer you! He's just a dreamer, full of big plans! Why you ought to heard him last night! And he's been married three times! He's not worth a hill of beans and never will be! I just can't imagine how a drifter like him without a cent to his name—probably in debt up to his ears—would even think of ruining somebody else's life too, just because he don't have anything! Why, he's an aimless bum!"

"That's the God's truth if I ever heard it!" Pearl shouted in agreement. She looked sharply at Helen. "You heard him, didn't you? Grayson knows a no good when he sees one."

"Well I said *no*," reminded Helen. "You don't have to jump on him like that; he didn't mean any harm. He's a nice man—he was just asking."

Grayson could not comprehend that Helen might have been flattered, and he grew increasingly indignant. He forgot he had no claim on her at all. He

looked to Pearl for help in cataloguing Ralph's faults.

"He's lazy, shiftless, and a dreamer," he told her. "Dreams and plans. That's all he's made of."

"And a thief too," Pearl decided angrily. "Can't trust him. He'll be after us honest folks around here next. Salesman, hell! Sneak and criminal is more like it! Bum!"

"Well, he was just *asking*," Helen said with finality. Suddenly an awkward silence descended upon them all. Grayson stood shamefacedly, in misery.

"Oh forget it!" Pearl finally said. "Who cares anyway?"

Dadblast it all, Grayson thought to himself upstairs. Just what does it all mean? I ain't got no claim on her. Never had the nerve. Grayson had secretly considered many times the prospect of marriage with Helen. But somehow, he had never asked her. And now this slicker beating him to it! Damn him! He just ruined it all. Marry her? Oh, it was silly. They weren't kids anymore. It was just silly. Besides, his heart was bad. I wish I'd never seen Helen, Grayson told himself.

By that evening Grayson was so upset he sat in front of the television and saw nothing. How can I face Ralph? he kept wondering. He was sure Ralph would be bold about the whole issue and make him miserable. He wished earnestly that Ralph would never come back. Maybe he wouldn't. No, that was crazy. Of course he would come back, Grayson decided. And Ralph did come back. But he was a different man.

Ralph's clothes were wrinkled and stained. His hair was in disarray, and his eyes were red. He looked tired and strained and not a trace of his enthusiasm remained. Grayson was overwhelmed at the swiftness and completeness of the change. He almost forgot about Helen and Million Dollar plans and did not realize that the defeated creature before him had apparently forgotten too.

"Well, no use denying it or beating around the bush," Ralph confessed. "I've had a couple of drinks."

Pity stabbed Grayson's heart. How devastated was this wet-nostriled, aging drifter before him. He fumbled for words. "Well, no harm in that, I don't reckon," he said. "Every now and then I have a beer or two myself."

Ralph chuckled disconsolately. "Naw, it ain't like that, pal. No, see . . . well, truth is, I've got a little drinking problem. Had it a long time. Been sick all day. Never could control the stuff. Been away from it over a year now. Guess I'm back." He sighed and lit a cigarette clumsily. Not a word about plans or fire alarms or Helen. Grayson watched his trembling fingers with amazement.

"Yeah," Ralph went on. "Right back where I was. Went down to the AA's this morning—that's where I go—hoped to run into old Ed Rose. Didn't see him though. I don't know pal—same way it always happens." He shook his head as though he couldn't believe what he had done. "It just happened, had a couple of drinks." He paused and examined his cigarette shakily. "Yeah, Pal, you wouldn't believe it to look at me now, but I was on top one time. That was back in Oklahoma. By all that's sacred pal, I was swimming in it. The green I mean. Had a big life insurance set-up. Top notch little business. Five men under me. Darling wife—finest woman God ever made. Eight kids. Don't know where they are now. Ain't seen any of 'em in . . . hell, I guess it's been seven or eight years. Oh, yes sir, friend, top of the line, and I mean the works: Caddy, brick house with a double garage, Baptist deacon. Even taught Sunday School. And pal, I was in every club they had—President of the Lions once. Did a lot of charity work. Man of the Year in '53. Even ran for mayor—nearly won it too. Yeah, guess you could say I've seen both sides pard, you with me?" His voice began to tremble and he paused. Grayson mumbled a word of sympathy and then fell silent as Ralph did not hear. "Yep, lost it all, every dang bit of it. Threw it away—forever. Kept getting worse and worse. Oh, it wasn't pretty friend. Lost it a piece at the time, little by little. Like torture. Before long, I didn't even care. My wife stuck by me as long as any woman could. Then I

woke up one morning and it was all gone. Hit the road and ain't been back yet." He finished and laughed. "Oh, hell, friend, listen to old Ralphie boy here, spilling his guts out to you. Ain't your problem."

"No," Grayson said. "I don't mind . . ."

"Yeah, I know pal. But it still ain't your problem. Hell, what's the use? Talking your ear and mine both off. That's the way I am though, always have been. Everything out front. No secrets. Salesman in me, I guess." He stood up abruptly and wiped his hands on his pants. He laughed meekly and shook his head.

"Guess we can forget about a million dollars—for now anyway," he said. "I've decided to move on. Got a brother'll take me in Cincinnati. You know how it is in this business, pal. Couple of things didn't come through—one thing and another. Timing a little off. Listen, tell the old lady if you see her, sorry I couldn't pay her nothing. Maybe someday I'll send her a check." He grinned. "I'll get back on top. One day. Always do. Been down, been up. Seen both sides. Take a little time, that's all. That's the secret pal: keep going. Don't roll over and die. There's plenty of time. Got to learn how to wait."

Grayson was speechless. He stood up too. "Well . . ."

Ralph chuckled and patted Grayson's shoulder. "Yeah, I know friend. Not much you can say. Well—be shoving off I guess. Tell 'em all adios."

Ralph started for the door but Grayson stopped him. "Listen," he said awkwardly. "I mean, I ain't got much, I know. But . . . well, is there anything I can do for you? A little money, maybe?"

Ralph chuckled. "Hey, pal, you're okay, you know it?" he said. "But I'll make it. You don't want to waste your money on the likes of me. I ain't worth it, pal. I'll be okay. But . . . well, thanks anyway, okay?"

Grayson nodded humbly. I would have given him whatever he wanted, he thought, and his heart soared.

The next morning Grayson asked Helen to marry him and she accepted.

An unusual sensation of anticlimactic relief filled Grayson and he didn't feel different. He thought only briefly of his dead wife, and when he did, he went and called his son to tell him the news. Grayson spent nearly two hours convincing Helen that they would have to leave Pearl behind to fend for herself. They could visit, Grayson insisted, and even though Helen pleaded that her old friend would shrivel up and die from loneliness, Grayson remained firm. Pearl herself made clear to Helen that she couldn't care less, that Helen was, and always would be, a fool. Helen felt guilty when Pearl slammed the door of her apartment and refused to come out. It wasn't until that afternoon, when Pearl sulkily emerged to drive to the post office, that she discovered her car had been stolen. The police were unable to find the thief or the car, and Grayson felt only a little guilty in hoping they never would.



APPEARANCES

Appearances
are
what
you
keep up
To
keep
others
from
seeing
your
imperfections
Which
might
allow
them
to
love
you
For
being
as
human
as
they are.

—Linda Snow

GO BLOW YOUR OWN HORN!

BOOK REVIEW BY THOM BOTSFORD

The Professional Job Changing System: World's Fastest Way to Get a Better Job, by Robert Jameson, Performance Dynamics, Inc., 210 pp., \$12.

Moving up the ladder of success, that old American dream, depends "70% on job hunting skills...and 30% on a person's background and ability," according to this slim volume of sophisticated advice from Performance Dynamics, Inc. Author Robert Jameson tells us in so many words that appearing qualified is more important than being qualified: "Those who arrive at the 'right time,' whose personalities 'mix,' and who 'appear' the best qualified are the ones who get the jobs."

Note his cautious use of quotation marks, a curtsy to our revered Protestant work ethic. Like most of us, Jameson can live comfortably within a hypocritical establishment, one that claims to value quality work but really prefers a good show. To this end, and without any unpleasant ethical comment, he tells the enterprising reader what size and color of stationery to buy, what kind of pen to use, when to make calls, how to phrase letters, how to take subtle command of job interviews, and even how to bargain from an unfortunate position (suppose one is working part-time, or not working at all).

I paid \$12 for such advice, "a good investment," according to *Nation's Business*; and "an indispensable aid for the job hunter," according to *Business Week*. The blurb from *The National Public Accountant*, however, actually induced me to order *The Professional Job Changing System*: "The techniques are capable of catapulting almost any average person into a posi-

tion offering much greater financial rewards."

Currently I am waiting to be catapulted. A month ago I mailed my first batch of truly professional letters and resumes, and, to be perfectly honest, I now have some leads in a tough job market. Even if I fail, I cannot fault Mr. Jameson. He has recommended the ultimate in job campaigns, and I have taken short-cuts. I have not hired a printer to make my resumes even more appealing to the executive eye. Nor have I poked into all the crannies of the library's trade publication collection to find my first thousand potential employers. Don't ask me if I have synchronized my mass mailings with the estimated prime time for getting the average fat cat's undivided attention.

No, I'm in a slump, working in the salt mines. There's just not enough energy to execute a well planned job campaign, I keep telling myself. Other readers, I suspect, will feel the same way unless they are unemployed or inspired by clichés. "When the going gets rough, the tough get going!" one company circular informed me, adding that its salesmen "eat a bowl of enthusiasm flakes each morning." This must be the secret metaphor of successful job hunters; they appear more or less *super-charged* as the occasion demands. The sophisticated Mr. Jameson would never spell it out for you so crudely, but his samples of successful letters and resumes clearly show us how ambitious professionals and graduates succeed.

Since most of the *Circle's* readers are young and hungry for success, let's examine the strategy of a recent graduate. Some of you will note that

this candidate is not too average, that he has connections and some impressive experience to his credit. But he is about as average a candidate as you will find in Jameson's book. He begins on an earnest note:

Dear _____:

For many years I've been actively following your firm. More recently, I've been reflecting about how a young man could get a point across to a top executive like yourself.

The point being — I feel I am intelligent, industrious and personable — and that I have all the necessary ingredients for a successful management career.

Raised in an atmosphere of business (my father is a prominent retailer), I have always been preparing myself for a business career.

While still in college, I launched two successful ventures. One, a clothes manufacturing company, grossed \$30,000 in its first year. The other, an Italian restaurant, was so popular that I franchised it and was netting \$900 a month before selling out prior to graduation. I also managed to work out 15 months of part-time work with two leading consultant firms, thereby gaining additional exposure to business problems.

I now have college, the Navy, and an additional two years of business education behind me. I have a knowledge of general business procedures, cost accounting, computer

applications, banking, underwriting, and marketing.

I'm attaching my resume, and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the possibilities of joining your organization. I will take the liberty of calling your secretary in a few days to see if you have been able to fit me in your schedule.

My thanks in advance, and I will look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely yours,

Super-charged, wouldn't you say? But sophisticated too, in the sense that our son of a prominent retailer knows the mentality of his market. The potential employer probably chuckled over the "actively following your firm" bit. When our candidate arrived for his interview, however, I'll bet you ten shares of blue chip stock that he appeared as though he had been following the firm throughout his college career. He talked, he marveled modestly, he enthused appropriately. Then he elaborated on his ability to gross, net, and franchise.

What if you haven't launched a pizza parlor? What if you have nothing more to enthuse over than an average college transcript and a few extracurricular distinctions? Do you give up? Throw in the towel? Leave the rough for the tough? Not on your life! You examine your record once again, this time with the eye of Robert Jameson. Surely at some point in your career thus far (remember: you've never had a mere "job") you've organized, supervised, originated, developed, directed, improved, arranged, analyzed, investigated, examined, or conceived of something! This is the language of success. Jameson puts it another way: "Successful job changers never underestimate their achievements. This is certainly not the time to be modest."

"Underestimate" is a very kind word. It substitutes for telling it like it is, for being too honest, which is never the appropriate strategy. Why, for instance, will a cleverly written letter

produce more interviews than a traditionally composed introduction and resume? "Resumes make it easier for readers to discover a reason for disqualifying you," says Jameson. Never mind that any of your shortcomings will show up on the job later. If you're sparkling enough to sell yourself today, you're smart enough to minimize any weak points as you perform in a dynamic career tomorrow. Indeed, as someone on the way up, you should find it easier and easier to find someone else — preferably someone who hasn't read this book — to cover for you without ever realizing it. You are Tom Sawyer, never Huck Finn.

And like Mark Twain, you learn to tell the truth — mainly. That is, successful job hunters *hedge* when they have to. Under the heading, "Telling the Truth About your Present Income," Jameson observes, "When it comes to financial matters, there can be little doubt that your competition will include some very imaginative liars. However, before you exaggerate your present level of earnings, you should be aware that it is very easy for an organization to check out your real income. In actual practice, most firms *will not* seek a verification of present salary, and if you did exaggerate your earnings, you probably will survive." In other words, lie a little bit if you think you can get away with it: "...hedge in terms of an expected bonus or increase in salary," for instance.

By now you should have the feeling for generating success. But I won't give away all of the secrets. "Maintaining secrecy," after all, is a small part of the game we are playing. Jameson even links confidentiality with a "curiosity factor" or mystique that can work in your favor. Never put a return address on letters requesting an interview, for example. Instead, on the left-hand side of the envelope, type, "*personal and confidential*." Chances are that an employer will remember your ploy to escape the secretary's file. Clever!

On the other hand, don't hesitate to blow your own horn when you finally have the proper audience. If you really want to climb the ladder, you will have to become a consistent puff-master. Jameson encourages us to think of job-

changing skills in terms of a lifetime. Obviously one never finds the right career: one merely moves to the next rung and begins anew. All of which remind me of a passage in Thomas Carlyle's *Past and Present*, one which I will keep in mind as I perfect my "show":

...The Hatter in the Strand of London, instead of making better felt-hats than another, mounts a huge lath-and-plaster Hat, seven-feet high, upon wheels; hoping to be saved *thereby*. He has not attempted to *make* better hats, as he was appointed by the Universe to do, and as with this ingenuity of his he could very probably have done; but his whole industry is turned to *persuade* us that he has made such! He too knows that the Quack has become God.

Interested readers can reach that sophisticated master of modern Quackery, Robert Jameson, care of Performance Dynamics, Inc.; Publishing Division; 17 Grove Avenue; Verona, New Jersey 07044.



WHEN THE WIND BLOWS

When the wind blows,
the rain falls,
And winter is here,
I will again think of you,
For you are lost to me.

The tears will not be as many
this time and the pain not
So sharp, for many winters
have passed me by.

Your cold, green eyes
and warm smile will not be
So visible, and I will not think
of love, for you are lost to me.

The wind will blow and
the rain will fall and
Maybe this time I will remember
the laughter.

—Tina Davis



HAIKU

Tangled in the wind
The willow as much as I
Struggles through the storm.

—Carol Danner

WE LASTED

We lasted only through the life of a rose
Only through the time allotted beauty
A short and magnificent life
The frailty of beauty...
The futility of withered brown petals

—Christy Hudgins

ADVICE TO THE LOVELORN

Just yesterday I chanced to meet a lady
With a plastic-coated rose stuck in her hair,
She told me I reminded her of Grady,
She said I had that certain kind of air.

Her mind began to wander through the clover
Of years stacked high along her barren shelves,
And I became her syncopated lover,
And I inhabited her many jails.

She drained the living juices from my body
And she left me for the vultures in the trees,
My dried-up carcass smelled a lot like Grady—

You know that bad things always come in threes.

—Danny Adams

HAIKU

The night is blackest
On a warm summer night when
The firefly flickers.

—Carol Danner

Events and artifacts all around us can be interpreted as evidence that Earth has had visitors from space before and that they are still coming.

SAUCERS FROM THE STARS

BY EROICA VON FANNIKEN

About the Author: Ms. Von Fanniken, orphaned in infancy, was reared by nuns of a contemplative order in a remote alpine convent in Switzerland. After completing a classical education she became a postulant of the order, but after twenty years and a heart-to-heart talk with the Mother Superior, she concluded that she did not truly have a religious calling. Hence, at the age of forty, Ms. Von Fanniken left her alpine retreat for the first time to explore the modern world as represented by a small academic community in the southeastern United States. Circle readers will find themselves seeing old familiar landmarks and institutions in a new way as they share Ms. Von Fanniken's fresh insights, printed here for the very first time.

I shall never forget my first sight of the modern world. After the night flight to Lisbon, crouched in the hold of a cargo plane, the moment of terror as the ropes holding the crate in which I was concealed slipped as the crane hoisted me aboard the tramp steamer, the murky waters of Mobile Bay, and the narrow escape when I tried to hide in the wrong end* of what I took to be an "automobile" after finally getting free of that crate on the State Docks by

**The only automobile vehicle Ms. Von Fanniken had ever seen in Switzerland was an old Volkswagen beetle. Her confusion at finding the engine in the front of a Chevelle is understandable.*

persistent pounding of the sides with my wooden shoe—how beautiful were the blue skies, the towering pines, and the spreading oaks along the broad avenues of the thriving metropolis that I learned was called the "Loveliest Village of the Plains."

I was able to elude workers and officials on the docks and conceal myself in the luggage space of a large automobile (once I found it), where I happily munched the very last of my Ementhaler and pumpernickel. I decided that wherever the vehicle came to a stop would be my new home. A happy fate brought me to rest in a parking lot behind a vast red brick structure which I came to know as Sewell Hall. Actually, it was some hours before I got a look at my new surroundings, for the operator of the vehicle had not packed anything in the trunk that trip, so did not open it until a friend asked to borrow a tool which was stored there. My knowledge of English at that time being purely from a textbook, I must admit that I did not fully comprehend all his comments upon discovering me draped over his spare tire.

Nevertheless I was quickly installed in a spare room in Sewell Hall and made to feel right at home. I was allowed to mend socks, sew on buttons, tidy rooms, etc., just as the sisters at the convent had allowed me to do during the twenty years of my postulancy there. In fact, I concluded that this Sewell Hall was the home of

some male order devoted to a religion unfamiliar to me—at least its rules were very different from those by which we had lived in the convent.

After a few days, during which they found some real American clothes to replace my now very-much-worse-for-wear habit, I was allowed to go out at will. At first, I was rather surprised that no one noticed me, but the purple slacks, three-inch soled clogs, and embroidered denim shirt enabled me to fit into the crowds along Magnolia and College Streets quite unobtrusively. I did notice that more greying middle-aged women like myself wore gaudy printed shirts than wore embroidered denims, but I was too grateful for the kindness shown me to complain about fashion! So I joyously began to explore my new world.

I may as well admit that one reason for my lack of success in convent life was my taste in reading. Once years ago, a box of discarded materials sent the nuns for use in their many charitable projects contained a little paperback volume entitled *Astounding Science Fiction*. I read every word, and when I mentioned my enjoyment of it to the old mountaineer who delivered those rare parcels to our convent, he passed the word along, and almost every delivery brought me new reading matter to enable me to keep up, even on that remote mountain top, with the exciting adventures of brave explorers on other planets and the landings of alien beings on our own



Figure 1



Figure 2

earth. How I wished one of those saucers would land on our mountain-top! But though I often saw their flaming trails and blinking lights from the narrow windows of my cell, they never came near.

Imagine the thrill I felt on my very first afternoon in the "L.V." when I looked out my window in Sewell Hall and saw one of these remarkable craft sailing so close that I could almost reach out and catch it. In fact, as I watched, it came by again, and that's just what I did! It was surprisingly small and light, made of something I later learned is called plastic. The part I caught seemed to be only a lid or flattened dome, and I could not find where the propelling mechanism was located, nor where the occupants would sit. At any rate they must be very tiny creatures, because the lid was no more than 40 centimeters in diameter and scarcely 4 centimeters high in the dome.

Hearing a shout from below, I stuck my head out the window and found several of the young men of the Hall scrabbling about in the bushes, looking into trees, and such. I held out the little saucer, and one of them yelled, "Mom's got it!" (Mom was their name for me—isn't it sweet?) So I carefully carried it downstairs and inquired where they had found it and if there

had been any other parts. The photography labeled Fig. 1 shows where it first landed, according to what they told me, and I was forced to conclude that the wee creatures who had piloted it from another world had escaped into the underbrush and propelled the dome of their craft away by thought-wave power to distract any chance observers.

My young neighbors, wrapped up as they were in their own very demanding order, had never given much thought to interplanetary exchanges, but once they knew of my consuming interest, they quickly made time in their busy routine to call to my attention other evidences of interplanetary contacts. The "campus," as they called the spacious grounds occupied by their order (and several others, including two for females conveniently nearby), proved to be unexpectedly rich in artifacts. As Figs. 2 and 3 show, the builders of the campus had placed beacons at high points, especially near the Birdcage,** of such a shape and structure as to be easily recognized by interplanetary travelers as signals of welcome, since they have the characteristic saucer and dome con-

**More about this remarkable structure later.

figurations so long favored by space voyagers.

Apparently, for all their well-preserved appearance, these beacons, and also the storage tank shown in Fig. 4, are very ancient structures, because many persons both on and off campus pooh-poohed my theory that they are associated with visits of interplanetary craft (which these ignorant persons consistently referred to as UFO's, which, I discovered, was an anagram for unidentified flying objects—though how they can be unidentified when the small ones such as I caught are in evidence everywhere and are used as toys by children!). The beacons are considered to be merely lights for surface illumination. (Then why so high, with the light aimed up instead of down?) The storage tower is popularly assumed to hold water; I am quite sure it holds fuel supplies to enable saucers to refuel for the homeward trip. Undoubtedly these people's ancestors knew the real purpose of these structures, and I am confident I shall uncover traces in their folklore.*** The state of preservation

***Most of this folklore seems to be embodied in either a printed or an audiovisual form called a "commercial." Certainly terms such as Sky Chief, Quasar, etc., are suggestive.

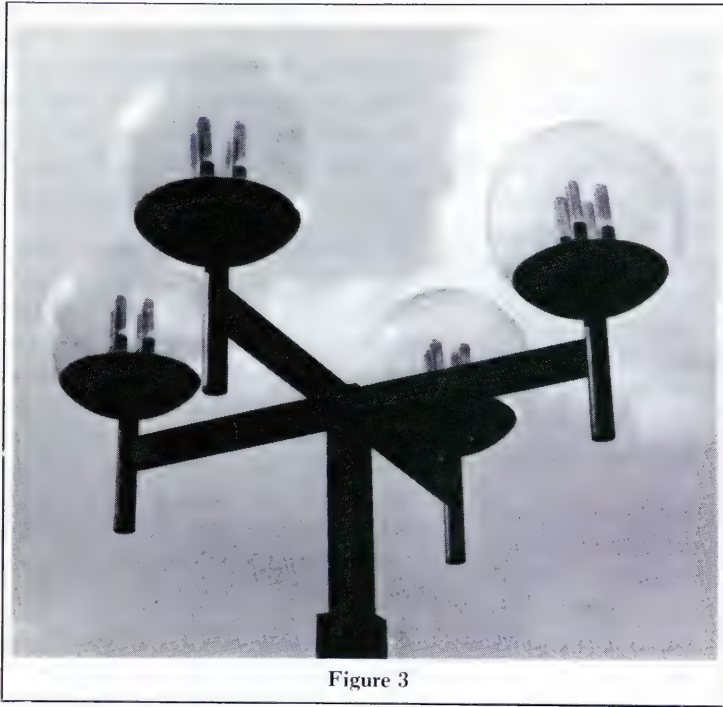


Figure 3

of the beacons, in particular, argues for a very advanced technology on the part of the civilization that either built them or inspired their building, for they show the erosion of time not at all.

With such evidence all around me of the continuing visitation of our planet by Others, I have every hope of a personal encounter with them, and am eagerly following every lead. (Fig. 5 shows the author engaged in an on-the-spot investigation.)

In addition to the indication of ongoing contacts with other civilizations, I



Figure 5

have found that the campus and adjoining areas of the "L.V." abound in mementos of past contacts. The first of these that I discovered was a huge grass-grown mound right up against a low brick building next door to Sewell Hall. The mound, I learned upon inquiry, is known locally as the grave of the Jolly Green Giant, apparently a heroic figure of the long past noted for his cheerful disposition and a sort of patron saint of the photosynthetic process. It is surprising to find the current mythology supposing such a hero dead, unless that myth arose out of the persistent creep of asphalt over formerly green areas. The building adjacent to the grave is a sort of temple or shrine to the hero. The attendants, upon entering, attach to their persons small badges consisting of a brightly colored frame around a film with a gelatinous coating. The hero, albeit buried, communicates with the attendants (priests?) by the appearance of dark spots on the film, which is sent off at intervals for translation of the message, presumably at the chief temple of the sect. I have not yet been able to determine the exact nature of the belief or ritual associated with the shrine. A word I have heard used in connection with it is "accelerator." Perhaps this implies some attempt at speeding up the photosynthetic process to keep ahead of the en-



Figure 4

croachments of the asphalt. If so, this ancient religion certainly plays an important role in modern life.

From the day of my arrival at Sewell Hall I have longed to understand more about the order it houses. Apparently the members are under no strict rule of secrecy, but in spite of their patient efforts to explain it to me, I must confess that both the theology and the ritual remain a mystery to me. In fact, there seems to be two main branches of the order housed in the one Hall. Members of one branch are exceedingly tall and on the whole slender for their height. The main object used in their ritual appears to be an inflated leather sphere and the ceremony involves putting this sphere into a mesh basket. Since the basket has no bottom this act must be performed repeatedly, and the frequency with which an acolyte does this is taken as a measure of his devotion, and therefore of his value to the order. My observation was that though these young men showed great diligence in the performing of their ritual and great loyalty and devotion to their abbot-bishop, known as Bobdavis, they were considered somewhat inferior to the other branch of the order.

The members of the dominant branch also have certain physical features in common. Not often as tall as the members of the other group,



Figure 6

it is even seen in the form of lamp bases (Fig. 6) and tie tacks.

As must be the case with any living religious movement, the Sewell Hall order has changed with the times. The chair-like device shown in Fig. 7 was pointed out to me as a relic of the rule of a former high priest named Shoog-jerd'n, who required members of the order to keep their hair neatly trimmed. I was surprised at the number of these chairs still on display in some four or five shops around town, but I was told that elderly former members of the order still use them regularly.

I have devoted considerable space to the costume and ritual of the order but I must now hasten on to describe what I have been able to grasp of its theology. So far as I can tell, the deity worshipped is, or possibly is only represented by, the inhabitant of the Birdcage, an eagle-like creature**** with golden brown plumage and a 1.3

*****Could the H's at the ends of the ritual field stand for "Hawk"?*

meter wingspan known as War Eagle IV. His confinement in the airy but nonetheless enclosed Birdcage seems to suggest a captive deity, worshipped with great pomp and show, but kept carefully under control lest he should demand too much of his worshippers.

I mentioned earlier that female orders are also housed on the campus at the "L.V." While most of the members seem to function obscurely as companions of the male orders, a few occupy a somewhat more prominent position as priestesses dedicated to the Bird. They are known as "War Eagle Girls." A mixed male-female group also serve the Bird by leading the worshipping public in ceremonial noise making.

As previously noted, the beacons for communication with interplanetary craft are located near the Birdcage. I have by no means rejected the possibility that Bird worship (as I have come to think of the campus religion) is handed down from some former visitors from space, but considerable

they are distinguished by great breadth of shoulder and chest, and their ritual garments are constructed so as to emphasize this feature still further. The ritual of this branch seems to center around another inflated leather object of ellipsoidal rather than spherical shape. This object is carried or kicked up and down a field marked with parallel white lines, with a wooden or metal "H" at each end. The members of the order occupy the field simultaneously with brothers from another abbey, distinguished by ceremonial costumes of a different color or colors, whom they bump into a great deal. This appears to be unavoidable, in the nature of the ritual, but the protective helmet worn is symbolic of the essential gentleness of the order and the loving concern of its members for each other, especially for the visiting brothers. Another universal physical characteristic of this branch is very hard, thick skulls, and the helmet is clearly designed to cushion the blow when the skull is used as a battering ram against a visiting brother. So universal is this symbol of gentleness that



Figure 7

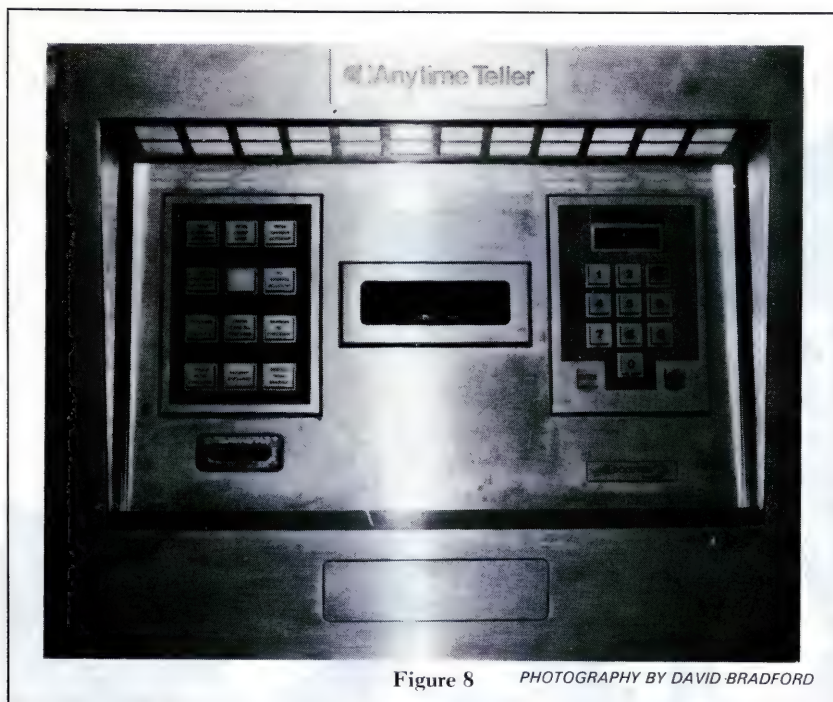


Figure 8 PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID BRADFORD

further inter-disciplinary effort is going to be required to establish the connection beyond question.

One final artifact observed on campus strikes me as deserving of comment. In fact, this may be the most significant of all. During my brief sojourn in the world beyond the convent I have observed a distressing amount of frustration, despair, and general chaos. No one seems to know who's in charge. Yet there it is, right on the way behind the main campus refectory, the control panel (Fig. 8) that must be able to put us in touch with those powers out there who are in control—if only we knew the code, or could find the golden key!



A PACT WITH YOUR MEMORY

Lying down
on the University Lawn
it does not enter my mind
that you are
alive somewhere, for
this mind has made a pact
with your memory, a
contract of sorts:

Sorry, no bitterness
Sorry, no nostalgia
Sorry no you.

—Mark McCullough

TO R.

Convinced that I mind your elaborate silence
You've colored me wistful, watching the phone
Assaulted by notions of purgative violence
Bewildered, nostalgic, and feeling alone.
—Your private delusion; I'm quite unaffected
By my standing with you or your feeling for me
Cherished, abused, enshrined or neglected—
I'm true to myself; what will be will be.
Today I remembered the gentle style
Of your beginnings, and the subtle rhyme
Behind your reason. If I spent a while
Recalling, so what? It helped pass the time.

So you think you've pierced this defensive wall
And gotten through to me? You're right. Please call.

—Diana Brooks



ILLUSTRATION BY MARY SKINNER

nearsighted wake

FICTION BY JAN BOYD NEAL

The moonlight filled the navy blue sky with streams of ivory joining the lightning bugs and chirring sounds of crickets. The two dark figures walked slowly across the library lawn, hands stuffed into pockets of bluejeans which would soon be replaced by flowing robes. Summer descended, this time as the end, the fourth season. Graduation would occur the next day.

"You know, I hate to admit it, but I'm gonna miss this hell hole a lot—for a few months anyway."

"Yeah, me too."

The silence of the campus was interrupted only by whispering voices here and there and the occasional sound of a dog barking and howling in the distance. Tomorrow night promised festive celebration in the streets, but tonight the village pondered over where it was going, knowing its elements would be torn apart and scattered beyond recognition in a few more hours. Respect for this premature wake was shared.

"I remember the first day here. God, it was tough. Just broke up with Bob and in walks this goofy looking roommate with spit curl rollers. God, that was ebb tide."

"Thanks, bitch."

"Sure, any time."

"Preciate that. By the way, did I ever tell you that I didn't understand a word you said for at least half of the first quarter? I just punctuated the silences with a few *uh-huh*'s and *uh-uh*'s and hoped like hell they were appropriate. I swear, back then you mumbled worse than a dog with laryngitis."

"Yeah, you told me, and I told you to clean your ears out."

They ambled down a campus walk, familiar as an old friend's face, and equally cracked and lined as walks and faces tend to become. Comfortable old buildings of red brick peeped down through the limbs of green trees above the young heads. The red bricks absorbed one more story, adding to their library of memories where last night's ghosts mingled with those of every night preceding.

"I wonder if we ever really believed it would end—this whole world."

"No, not really."

"Such innocent fools—ha! It won't exist after tonight for me anyway. I almost wish I'd planned to go on and stay at the apartment till September, even if it meant camping on top of you and Tony."

"You're welcome, you know."

"No dice, gotta go. It's time to."

"At least you've got somewhere to go. A job in Atlanta. All I've got is artistic frustration. The sidewalks of gay Paree don't exactly yield forth a salary for painting on them, and there's no telling when we'll have the coin to go."

"But at least you've got somebody to wait around and be frustrated with."

"Think that's so great? Woman does not live by bread or love alone. Neither does man, and Tony's as fond of eating as I am."

"Maybe so, but bread and love beat the hell out of nothing, and I'm an authority on fasting."

"Cool it, okay? Cutting yourself down accomplishes nothing but a mild case of the blues."

"I'll quit cutting myself down when you quit biting your fingernails and chain smoking. Anyway I have more right and reason to bitch than you do. I did warn you about those sexy artistic types and how they wouldn't complement your karma. But since I'm not an 'I told you so' type, don't worry about trivial things like food. I'll send you guys a bag of peanut M&M's and a generous supply of popcorn on the third of every month."

"What a jewel in the rough, I tell you, man. Listen who's talking about crapy karma. You love Tony, too, by now, and who the hell cares about karma? Perspective is what counts, right?"

"True."

"Well, okay."

"Don't forget you and Tony have preappointed me godparent of your first kid. Provided you ever have one. Picture you with a baby—that's a real riot!" Laughter pierced the night, somehow an inappropriate but always welcome intruder sneaking out of the shadows. The shared laughter came easy, free, unplanned, and as natural as breathing, that night and many before it.

"Have to agree with you. But if we ever slip up, and abortion is illegal,

you're a guaranteed godparent. I just hope I get to drink a toast to you at your wedding. Wherever you are, no matter what time, you better call me."

"If you're allowed to make a long distance call out of a nursing home, you can count on it."

"Damn it, there you go again cutting yourself down. Didn't I teach you anything in four years?"

"Sure you did, like how to survive off of peanut butter and lemon supreme cake; how to avoid undue paranoia; and the subtle art of saying 'go to hell' to people who bug me. Am I supposed to be indebted?"

"Just a little, and you did forget one."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah, like how to rig a dime for the candy machine in the dorm. Some day when you're crawling the streets of Atlanta all hungry and thirsty you'll dig out your last dime from that antique blue wallet and say a prayer of thanks for the scope of your education."

"Yeah, mingled with the curses. Remember when we got the bright idea that we were gonna learn to smoke? Winter quarter, freshman year. Back then we could half a pack and it would last a week...not to mention make us turn green and vomit. Stupidest thing we ever did. Here we are chaining it—you in particular—like it's going out of style."

"I know, I'm gonna have to quit when I get a chance. But there's just too much going on right now. It was always that way..."

"Like all those all-nighters when I was living off of coffee and you were so-called existing off diet pills."

"Remember how you could hear the train way off and how it sounded so eerie and sad?"

"Sure did. Every morning at 2:11 on the dot. Reminds me of the night after the peace demonstration when we all went down to the creek and got smashed on red wine by the bonfire. Red wine for red blood shed on Nam. Poor ole Mac. I can just see him sitting there passing the bottle, the next spring dead as a doornail in Nam...Still miss him sometimes...even if his jokes were corny."

"Me, too."

"Did you ever figure out how we got home that night?"

"Nah. It's probably best we don't. I recall being sick as a dog the next day, and screwed the night before. All I can remember now is Tony asking if he could and me saying yeah. It was a little depressing 'cause I thought the first time was supposed to be a big deal and all. But it really isn't."

"At the time it was."

"Sure, even if I couldn't remember a whole lot of it. Now it seems a little insignificant."

"Like the first time you got drunk. That damned straight vodka. Crying, confessing, and raising hell. I wasn't a whole lot of help being as drunk as you were."

"Yes you were. At least you knew it

was the first time and a big deal to me. I couldn't tell anybody else that at the time. God, I had a long way to go back then and didn't even realize it."

"Still got a long way to go—we all do—everybody here does."

"Wonder where we are going?"

"I don't know..."

The night continued on, even though the two shadows stopped and faced each other. Nothing could stop the night or the hourglass. They knew it, and that was the reason their eyes were wide, deep, and full.

"Hey, kiddo, you better write me."

"We'll stay in touch. No doubt about it."

"You've been a familiar face in a town of strangers coming and going, you know. Thanks for every-

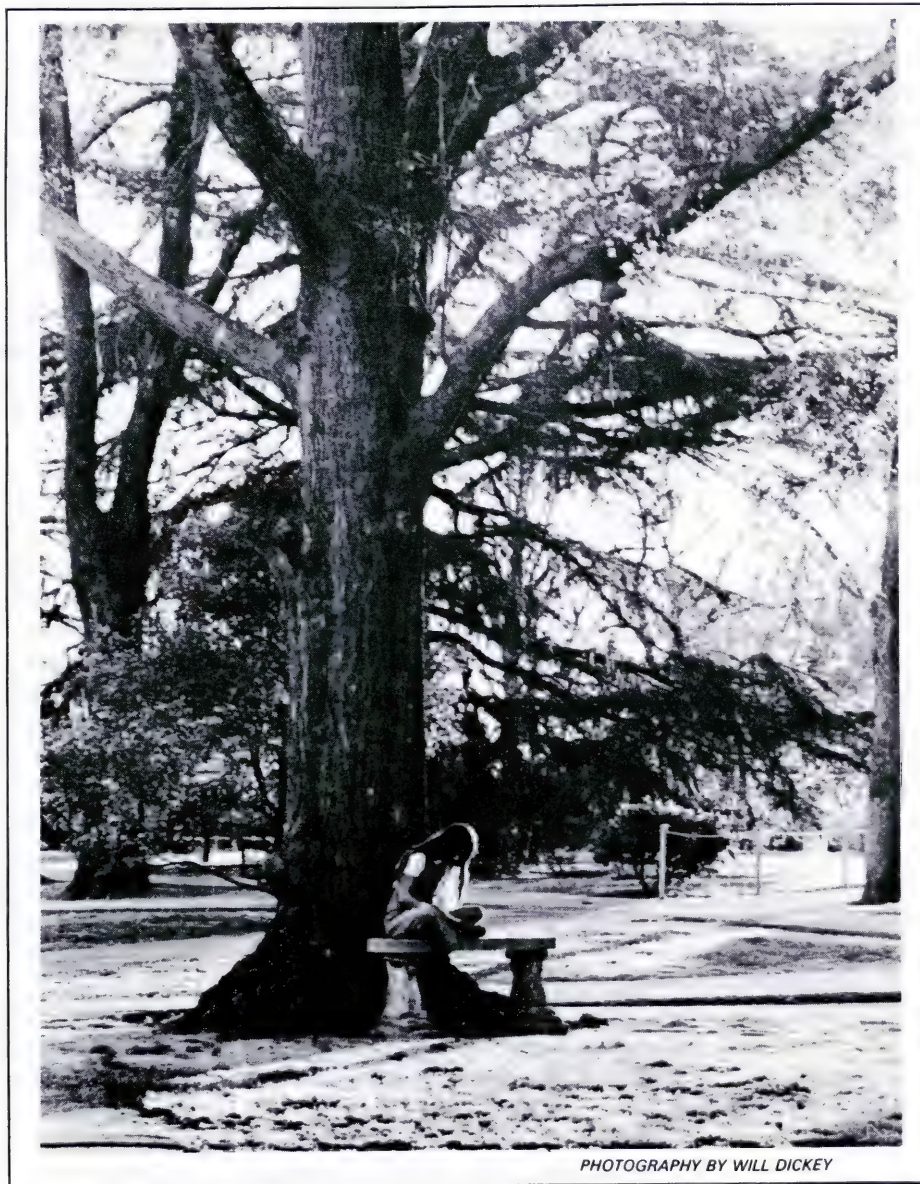
thing...you made it bearable sometimes when it wasn't."

"Same here. I guess growing up's a little easier with company. You're my sister now, and I'll miss you."

"Not a lot, though, cause I'll still be close by."

"And me, too."

They smiled weakly and resumed the night crawl, the last of a four year ritual and the end of a long-term therapy. The warm wind rushed by with time, mocking their devotion. Fortunately they were young enough that night to believe they had control over the future; they heard the warm wind as only a lovely reminder that summer was almost there.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILL DICKEY

BOOKENDS

We were like a
Pair of bookends—
Perfectly matched,
But there was always
Something between us,
Keeping us from touching.

—Chris Morris

THE COMING

Ancient
in her grave she lay
Her mind
embraced, embalmed,
engulfed
with the smell of clay
Waiting
Waiting
Waiting . . .

—Susan White



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM HAGOOD

IT'S WINTER

It's winter;
The beach is empty
Where before, multi-colored
Umbrellas dotted the sand.
And only to the music of
The waves can I
Dance across the dunes.
Oh, it's kind of nice
Being here again, alone,
Yet weird
With nothing to do.
Contemplation of the
Summer before brings
A quick smile to my face.
But I hide it from
Someone seen from the corner
Of my eye.
Who is that walking over there?
Not him; surely
He didn't remember the promise
We made, laughing as the hot sun
Burned our faces.
Imagine!
It's so far for him to come, and
It's winter!

—Cathy Ellis

ISRAEL: PAST AND PRESENT

—or *The Promised Land on less than \$5 a day.*

BY HELENI PEDERSOLI

It had been a long, cold winter, the second of our stay in Iran, and I still felt like Frost's transplanted peach tree—unable to grow any roots in that barren soil. For my fourteen-year-old son John and me, the chance of a vacation in Israel was like a reprieve from a self-imposed exile.

El-Al's 747 descended serenely through the wisps of cloud, and the captain's voice informed us that we would be landing in Tel-Aviv in about ten minutes. The passengers craned their necks eagerly toward the windows, tugging at seat-belts, to catch a glimpse of the city. And suddenly the soft music coming through the intercom turned into the rousing chords of Hava Nagilla. Soon everyone joined in, singing and clapping as the patches of green fields sped by below and we approached Ben Gurion Airport. We too joined in the final joyous Alleluia!, and it was like coming home again—the emotion of my Israeli travel companions was contagious. Tel-Aviv shone in the sun, flanked by green fields on one side and the deep blue of the Mediterranean on the other.

At the airport we had some trouble shaking off the over-eager taxi drivers who wanted to take us to the Hilton. They just wouldn't be convinced that we weren't rich American tourists, that my "fur" coat was really fake, and that all we wanted was a cheap hotel, away from the glitter of the city. We finally

found a condescending fellow (or he found us), and with the help of Tourist Information we found one hotel that wasn't over-priced.

In a few hours we had decided that hotels and tours weren't for us, and if we really wanted to see as much of the country as possible in fifteen days, we would have to rent a car. But that would take one-third of our budget. Could we possibly survive on the rest? We'd have to give up good meals in restaurants, sleeping in soft hotel beds, and other amenities, really roughing it. We considered the matter carefully as we strolled the next morning through Tel-Aviv's downtown area, and got acquainted with its people.

Our first impression was not of a nation stooping under the weight of a long-drawn-out war, but that of joy and pride of achievement shining in the eyes of everyone we met. "Do you like Israel?" they would ask, and behind the stereotyped question we could read the comments: "Isn't this beautiful? See what we have accomplished?"

We strolled through streets lined with sidewalk cafes, European-style, where fancy boutiques and stores opened their doors, offering all sorts of merchandise—mostly Israeli-made. We climbed to the top floor of Shalom's Tower for a splendid view of the city, aware now of the threat that still hung in the air—of terrorist bombs—when our bags and packages were searched by security guards

posted at the entrance to every store and public place. By nightfall we had decided to take our chances and rent a car. The man from Hertz—having the most competitive prices and economical cars—put us in the driver's seat of a brand-new Ford Cortina, assembled in Israel, and we took off under the bright blue sky of that Sunday morning, breathing air salty with sea-smell, to discover the glories of the past and the achievements of the present.

We backtracked first to old Jaffa, ancient Egyptian and Canaanite port-city from which Jonah had sailed. There, at lunch, we had our first *falofel*, which is to Israelis what hamburger is to us. Fried cakes—made of mashed chick-peas mixed with chopped onions, garlic, parsley, coriander, salt, and pepper—are stuffed into a flat, round roll; chopped tomatoes, cucumbers, pickles, and sometimes even cole-slaw give the finishing touches. Pour hot sauce over the whole thing, and you've got a meal tastier than a taco and more nutritious than a Big Mac for less than thirty cents.

The highway connecting Tel-Aviv to Haifa runs parallel to the Mediterranean, through modern towns like Netanya, basking in the sun of what is called the Israeli Riviera. In the middle of March we could already go for a swim along stretches of white sandy beaches.

From there on, the country becomes

hilly and increasingly green, covered with forests. We reached Haifa late in the afternoon, after visiting Mount Carmel where the prophet Elijah lived in a cave still preserved under the dome of a beautiful church. We wanted to reach Akko (the famous Acre of the Crusaders) before dark, but we had to linger for a while in the restful Persian gardens of the Bahai Temple. The aroma of pine, salvia, thyme, and jasmine wafted up in the crisp afternoon breeze, and blended with the laughter of a wedding party on the lawn. We reached Akko at sunset, and strolling by the ancient battlements in the seashore we dreamed of knights and ladies fair, of the Holy Grail.

We bought some bread, milk, and a can of tuna, and drove up the mountain in search of a place to sleep. It is a busy road, the one connecting Haifa to Kuneitra on the Golan Heights, and military trucks and tanks chugged continuously up and down the steep, winding hill. We made it to the observa-

tion point atop the mountain, a magnificent view below us of Akko and Haifa, twenty-four kilometres away. The city shone brightly, cradled in the bay. It seemed a perfect spot to spend the night, so after our frugal dinner, we crawled inside our sleeping bags and tried to rest our weary bones, tired but happy—it had been a perfect first day, and we had spent less than two dollars! The heavy traffic kept me awake for a while, but soon exhaustion overcame the noise and I fell asleep, watching the stars through the windshield.

Birds woke me at the first light of dawn. I got up, stretched to get rid of some cramps from sleeping in the car, and looked around. We were high indeed—1,500 feet above sea level—and we could see almost as far as Tel-Aviv. The plain of Zebulon stretched for miles below us, as far as the eye could see. We were in the Galilean hills, covered with forests and blooming with all kinds of wild flowers.

Before 5 a.m. we started out, hoping

to see a lot of the country that second day. The cruel reality of the war was inevitable, contrasting with the peacefulness of those hills. All along the road we would see groups of soldiers, in full military garb, carrying machine guns, rifles. And the charred remains of tanks and trucks reminded us that not too long ago a full-scale war was raging in that place. We found it strange that the soldiers were asking for rides from the drivers coming their way. One billboard on the right-of-way read: "Driver, have you given a soldier a lift today?" We obliged and soon had a carload of soldiers with their big boots and machine guns. Strange, driving alongside a machine gun. . . .

Our soldiers were on their way to the Golan Heights; security had been increased along the border with Syria. Passover was coming, and the Israelis knew only too well that a time for rejoicing is also a time for watching. We arrived at Hazor before seven o'clock.

One of the oldest Canaanite towns,



ILLUSTRATION BY RACHEL McALLISTER

Hazor had been at one time the capital of the Canaanite kingdom and later King Solomon's royal city. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the remains of that city is the underground water system. We descended 130 feet below sea-level to a tunnel that led to the water source outside the city walls. In times of siege, those water systems meant the survival of the inhabitants of the city. Contrasting with the ruins is the new, modern museum, built with the help of an American Jewish couple. As we waited for it to open, the caretaker asked me something in Hebrew. When I stated my ignorance of the language, he rebuked me in perfect English:

"For shame! Don't you say your prayers? Every Jew who says his prayers will know enough Hebrew to get along fine in his own country."

"I don't doubt it. Trouble is—I'm not Jewish."

He was surprised:

"You *look* Jewish . . ."

"I am starting to *feel* like a Jew! Perhaps centuries ago in Portugal, one of my ancestors was forced into conversion to Christianity, or perhaps did it willingly. It's known that names of trees and animals were used as last names to baptize these new converts. My name is one of those: Pinheiro, or pine tree."

"Poor Jewish people!" He shook his head sadly. "Persecuted, tortured, murdered, converted, slaughtered, denied a homeland . . ."

He recommended that we have breakfast at a nearby kibbutz, and sold us a card that entitled us to visit every State and National Park and Monument in Israel. It cost us fifty cents. We had already paid that much in entrance fees, without the card! When we finished looking at the museum's holdings (mainly artifacts from the Canaanite period found in the excavations) we did as he had told us, for we were really starved by then.

I had never been in a kibbutz and somehow I had always thought of them as farms with some shabby, makeshift buildings, put up in haste, where the kibbutzim had to rough it. We drove up to the guest house, through wheat and corn fields, and vegetable plots, emerald green. The

work day was already in progress. Crops were being dusted by airplanes, cows milked in brand-new, shining-with-stainless-steel stalls, and more ground was being prepared for planting by modern tractors. The guest house was an impressive building, with glass windows all around, surrounded by well-kept lawns and gardens blooming with exquisite flowers. We walked into the immense dining hall. Tables were littered with the debris of breakfast. Boys and girls laughed and sang as they cleaned up. We found a clean table, and soon they started bringing the food: olives, pickles, fresh vegetable salad, smoked salmon, rolls, butter, jelly, yogurt, cheese, coffee, tea, milk, scrambled eggs—all produced in the kibbutz, all fresh and delicious. We stared at the profusion with disbelief, and I was amazed when the man at the cash register told me two dollars.

It was with a spirit of reverence and wonder that we took the road south, toward the Sea of Galilee. This was for us now holy ground; we couldn't stop thinking that we were following in Jesus' footsteps. We came upon the Mount of the Beatitudes first—its beautiful church commanding a view of the plains and the lake—its blueness enveloped still in the morning mists. By the lakeshore there is a place called Tabgha, with a simple Franciscan church covering the rock where Jesus is said to have stood after his resurrection and where he fed a multitude with a basketful of bread and fish. The ancient Byzantine mosaic floor in the chapel still depicts the two fishes and five loaves. The mystical peacefulness of the place took hold of us.

We arrived in Nazareth in the middle of the afternoon, and suddenly everything changed. This now was Palestine. The faces in the street, the peacefulness of the fields, and even the civilized rush of Tel-Aviv and Haifa changed to the loudness of voices speaking a different language; brown-skinned children running barefoot through dusty streets amidst donkeys, chickens, and sheep; men wearing caf-tans and headdress; veiled women—it was like being back in Iran. We rushed through the church of the Annunciation where a guide tried to convince us

to go eat shish kabob with him. Instead we visited Mary's well and climbed one of the hills to see that breathtaking view on our own. The city cradled in the hills, the plain of Esdraelon all the way to Mount Tabor stretched before us. We thought of the child who ran through these hills, brown-skinned and barefoot like the town's children.

By this time we had already filled our gas tank twice, each fill-up taking a considerable bite from our budget. Of all the nations enduring the hardship of the Arab oil embargo, Israel was, of course, suffering the most. One dealer told us that all the oil pumped out of the Sinai wells was being sent to Europe—Israel needed the money badly. So the people just had to walk more; with the price of gas at two dollars a gallon, most people had no choice. Meanwhile I was concerned by our fast-shrinking traveler's checkbook. Our stomachs grumbled for a full meal, and I was beginning to long for a hot bath and a good night's sleep on a comfortable bed. In this not so bright mood we drove south of Nazareth, toward Beit-Shean.

It was then that we decided to try the Youth hostels. The lady at the Ministry of Tourism in Tel-Aviv had told us about them, but I was reluctant to try. I knew that in the U. S. and Europe only students under twenty-five years old could stay in hostels. Although I was a student, I was certainly way past the age limit. But now it was getting dark and we were hungry, and the area was becoming less populated—this was the Jordan Valley, lusciously green and beautiful. We were also close to the Jordanian border, where trouble frequently occurred. We followed the signs for the Maayan Harod Hostel, and finally got there just before dark. It was in a national park, one of King Herod's resorts, where he came to relax in pools heated by hot mineral springs. Now a band of noisy young people—probably some school on holiday—romped on the grassy slopes and splashed in the pools. We finally found the hostel's guardian. He was a tough-looking fellow, who spoke only Hebrew and French, and the first thing I noticed was the .45 he wore con-

spicuously at his belt. When we inquired if we could spend the night at the hostel, he simply asked for our passports, handed us a key and some bedclothes, and pointed to a low building near the entrance. The room was furnished with eight bunkbeds. We made ours and walked over to the dining hall. Dinner cost \$4 for both of us, and the price of the beds (\$5) included breakfast. Not bad, and we were truly famished—all we had had for lunch was some fruit bought at Nazareth's bazaar. On the way to the dining hall we noticed the first signs of the strictly enforced security we would find from then on. All the men wore guns, and signs warned guests to beware of any packages, suspicious or not.

After a hearty breakfast the next morning we left for Beit-Shean, a city that has been inhabited for 6,000 years. Here the bodies of King Saul and his sons had hung from the walls. The magnificent remains of the Roman theatre must be one of the best preserved in the world. Beit-Shean was once wealthy Scythopolis, on the trade route of the East, one of the cities of Decapolis. We climbed the mountain-like mound to see the ruins of the Canaanite and Israelite town on the top. The view was breathtaking—if one still had any breath to be taken after the climb. Sprinkled with yellow flowers, the grassy slopes fell precipitously toward the valley and the cool rapids below that cascaded down toward the Jordan. The only incongruous sight was the everpresent machine guns of the soldiers.

Megiddo rises spectacularly out of the plain of Esdraelon. An archaeological wonder—twenty different historical periods, from 4,000 B. C. to 400 B. C., were brought to light during the Rockefeller Foundation-financed excavations between 1925 and 1939. Being situated in a strategic position, astride the great road from Egypt to Syria and Mesopotamia, it was the scene of mighty battles throughout history, right up to the First World War. And according to the prophecy in Revelations, it is there that the great final battle of Armageddon (a corruption of the Hebrew *Har*

Megiddo) will take place. With the overpowering sense that I was touching history, I limped on blistered feet through the magnificent halls of King Solomon's fortified chariot-city and the older remains of Hyksos and the Canaanite cities.

And now we had to drive through Samaria—where one felt a lot less secure than in the Israeli-settled part of the country. Where indeed, from time immemorial, the Jews traveling to Jerusalem had been fearful. Where James and John asked Jesus if he wouldn't send fire down from heaven to consume the inhospitable Samaritans. Where we strangely relived the parable of the Good Samaritan.

We stopped at Sebaste, and then kept on driving down to Nablus, ancient capital of Samaria, where I planned to find a hospital and get treatment for some badly-infected blisters which by that time had left me almost unable to walk. At the gas station where we filled up, I got the directions to the hospital, but somehow I missed it, and drove up a steep street. Nobody understood English, or French, or German. Even my reduced Hebrew vocabulary found no response. I turned and drove slowly down the hill, ready to go back to the gas station. At that moment, a gentleman came across the road:

"May I help you?" he asked in perfect English.

I sighed with relief.

I explained our situation, how I had gotten in my present condition, and he was immediately sympathetic and kind. He rode with us to the hospital and at the emergency room asked for a friend who was a doctor there. The man came immediately and looked at my infected and swollen foot. My good Samaritan, Mr. Mabruk, stayed through the whole ordeal of having the festering blisters lanced and dressed. Because I was a tourist, I didn't have to pay anything, and Mr. Mabruk insisted that we go to his house and rest before we went on our way. There I met his wife and his daughters, who brought us comfortable chairs in their beautiful garden and served us tea and cake, cookies, nuts, orange juice, and all sorts of sweets. Mrs. Mabruk insisted that we spend the night with them, but

I was anxious to get to Jerusalem, where I dreamed of arriving on Palm Sunday, so we left them, promising to write and thanking them for their kindness.

We had about three hours of daylight left, and with luck we would have made it to Jerusalem, but the road was curvy and busy, my foot hurt, and we just couldn't make good time. We arrived in Ramallah at night, and I told John we could go no further. But where could we stay? There were no hostels, and we had been told hotels were not to be trusted in that region. We came upon the police station. There were two military trucks full of soldiers and guns, and even a tank, in front of it. I asked whether anyone spoke English. One of the soldiers came forward. He had a New York accent.

"Is there any place around here where we can spend the night?"

"Are you tourists?"

"Yeah."

He scratched his head.

"Well, there is a hotel downtown, if you want to take the chances."

"What do you mean — take the chances?"

"This is a troublesome area, bad things happen around here all the time. You know — bombs, hostages, things like that."

"Oh! Wow! Any other suggestions?"

"I suggest you go on to Jerusalem. On the other hand, stay around, I'll be off duty at midnight, we'll go into town, eat a shish kabob, have a few drinks, and talk until morning."

"Very funny!" I told him about my foot, and how I still didn't feel well.

He introduced me to the Palestinian police officer inside the station, who also spoke English well. I asked permission to park in the parking lot and spend the night there. He found it very strange that we wanted to do that when there was a very good hotel downtown.

"The trouble is, we don't have too much money. I would really rather sleep in the car."

He showed concern for my hurt foot. I suppose I looked rather tired and bedraggled. I assured him that I would be all right.

"You shouldn't trust these Israeli

soldiers. They're no good. Just no good."

"I'll lock the doors."

He thought for a while, then he went to call the police chief. He bade me sit down, and disappeared across the street. After a while he returned.

"Turn your car around, and park in front of the station. Then come with me. I found you a place to spend the night."

He took us to a house across the street. We climbed the wooden stairs to the top floor, where a young man met us. They talked in Arabic, and then we were shown into a room with two beds. The place looked like a rooming-house. In the living-room a TV was showing a western.

"Is it good?" the captain asked about the room.

"It's great, but how much will it cost?"

"Don't worry about that," he said, and I saw him slip the young man some money.

"Please let me pay you back," I asked, when John and Yasser, the young man, had gone down to get our belongings.

"Listen — Ramallah is my country. I am proud to have you here as my guest. When you get to Jerusalem tomorrow, say a prayer for me. Do you want anything to eat? Some tea?"

"Tea would be great."

When the boys came back, he helped carry our sleeping bags and clothes inside the room and told Yasser to bring us tea, milk, anything we might want. Then he wished us good-night, and warned:

"Lock your door when you go to sleep."

He left, and soon Yasser brought the little cups of tea on a tray. We ate jelly, peanut butter, and crackers we had brought from Iran and stretched our sleeping bags on top of the not-so-clean bedding. We fell asleep in no time.

Yasser took some time to ask us about America in the morning. Like so many young men in that part of the world, he dreamed of one day going to America to study, or to work and get rich. He told us his father had emigrated to Brazil, and being the oldest, he had to take care of his

mother and sisters. He gave me his father's address in Brazil, and asked me to write to him and tell him that I had met his son, that all was well with them, and to come home — everyone missed him. He also told me that although things in Palestine were better than before, it was very sad that they didn't have a country anymore and were instead the "slaves" of the Israelis. We had more tea, and said good-bye to our new friend. At the station, the captain had gone off duty, but I left my address and a message of thanks for him.

The road from Ramallah to Jericho waves through the terraced Judean hills. Here one reels back to biblical times. People dressed in robes and brightly striped headdresses sedately guide their mule-pulled plows; bare-legged children ride donkeys in the dusty roads: long-skirted women carry water jugs on their heads.

Ageless Jericho is an oasis amidst the barren hills. Believed to be the oldest city in the world, it was Joshua's first conquest in the land of Canaan. To Jericho he sent his spies who came back loaded with produce from the land that flowed with milk and honey. When we went to visit the walls that fell at the sound of the Israelites' trumpets, we made another interesting acquaintance. He was a small, withered old man, full of vigor and vivacity. He came to offer his services as a guide.

"You American? Speak English?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Me guide. Me show you all Jericho. Me show you beautiful synagogue nobody knows about."

"Well, thank you. We can do it on our own. We don't have too much time," I answered, knowing there would be a price for his services.

"Me guide here for sixty year. Me boy when start guiding. German peoples, French peoples, all come here and me guide them. Me learn French, German, English, Hebrew, from guiding peoples."

He followed us into the compound, talking incessantly.

"German, French, American, British peoples pay me seven, eight, ten dollars for guiding. Me very good

guide. Me know all about Jericho."

"Is that so? Well, thank you very much, but we can't possibly pay you. We just will have to do it on our own."

That didn't discourage him, for he followed us on, explaining about the buildings, about how one could tell the difference between a Canaanite and a Israelite building, by the way they placed the stones on top of each other. He also pointed out how the Crusaders built theirs, borrowing stones, pieces of columns, and whatever was lying around.

"Listen, Mr. Ahmed, don't you think you may be missing some tourists that can pay you for your services? We are just poor students. We just can't afford to pay a guide."

He shrugged, and kept on telling us the history of each wall, each foundation. Then he showed us to the top of a hill, from where we could see the actual city of Jericho.

"Jericho is valley full of flowers, date trees, apple trees, almond trees. All drinks from spring. People drink from spring, animals drink from spring, trees and flowers drink from spring. Whole Jericho drinks from spring."

We were stuck with him. Later on he took us to see the synagogues and Sheik Hisham's Palace—a marvel of Islamic architecture destroyed by an earthquake long ago. Then he took us to have breakfast at a small Arabic restaurant.

"You eat now true Arabic breakfast," he said, showing us how to eat the chick-pea paste with the flat bread, while sipping cardammon tea from tiny cups.

"This is real good for you. Chick-peas with lemon and olive oil good for you. You going to Dead Sea? Dead Sea good for you. You go there, foot be good as new again. Salt good for hurt foot."

And he would look around, proud of being on such good speaking terms with his American tourists. He wanted to take us somewhere else, but I absolutely refused, saying we had to return the car in Jerusalem the next morning. I paid for the breakfast, and gave him a couple of dollars after all.

"You go to Jerusalem, return car, then come back to Jericho tomorrow,

with bus. Car too expensive, anyway. Bus cheaper. Me take you in my car to Dead Sea. You come tomorrow, O.K.?"

"O.K." I answered, to get rid of him. "We'll be here."

At the Mount of Temptation I couldn't resist climbing up to the summit, where an old Greek Orthodox monastery stands, perched on the rocks. Of the community which once amounted to more than one hundred, five monks are left, living up there, in the middle of the wilderness, with hardly any human contact—the monastery is almost completely inaccessible, except to those with strong legs and a lot of determination. But the view from the top is fantastic. Here Jesus spent forty days and forty nights fasting and praying. Here those men—dedicated to the worship of God—spend their whole lives in sacrifice and self-denial.

Coming down from the Judean hills to the Dead Sea is a truly unforgettable experience. The surroundings change completely from verdant oasis to a salt desert. In one of the many caves around the Qumran area a shepherd found the invaluable Dead Sea scrolls. We descended 1,300 feet below sea level, and suddenly the sea appeared out of the brown earth, sparkling like a sapphire in the sun. Salt sculptures were an interesting attraction along the shore, reminding one of Lot's wife. Its surface smooth as polished glass, the sea sparkled with myriad specks of light. At the resort town of Ein Gedi we stopped to try the utterly amazing experience of swimming in its water. All one has to do is sit and lie back, and the heavy waters that have the feel of cream, hold you up, and make you float without any effort. And when getting out, one has to march immediately to the showers provided on the beach, otherwise one turns into a statue of salt.

It was a beautiful moonlit night, and we decided to sleep on the beach under the stars. Many people were doing the same, and we joined two Hebrew University students from France, who had a guitar. We sang folk songs into the night and went to sleep when the moon set. I woke up at dawn and just sat in awe, watching the east light up

with different shades of pink and orange, until the sun came up in glory. We had a long way to go, so we started early. It was a hot day, and the desert sun was burning, even in the early morning.

After eating breakfast at the modern cafeteria and watching Henry Kissinger's helicopter take off, we drove again toward the Negev desert. The heat increased as we went further south.

On the way to Avdat we hit a sandstorm. Heaven and earth were enveloped in dust—greyish like moon dust—and suddenly we found ourselves riding a cloud of sand, the high winds whipping it against the sides of the car. We made it back to Beer-Sheva eventually from there to Ashkelon. We had come full circle.

We found a campground by the beach, rented a cabin for the night, and dined on olives, cold baked beans, bread, nuts and fruit.

By now we were absolutely overwhelmed by the beauty of the country, the diversity of its landscape, the kindness of its people, the energy, happiness, enthusiasm of its settlers. And we also understood why this people had remained loyal and kept their faith, against all odds; against oppression, persecution, exile, slaughter. We turned northward, thankful for being able to go to Jerusalem at such an auspicious time: the Jewish Passover and the Christian Easter coincided exactly that year. It was also a Holy Year—a very special one for us Catholics. And above all, there was peace in the land.

Bethlehem is disappointing. In its eagerness to protect the holy places, the Greek Orthodox Church has covered them with marble forever blackened by incense fumes. One can't possibly associate the mausoleum-like Church of the Nativity with the place where Jesus was laid in a manger. The fact that the Basilica is one of the oldest churches in all Christendom may account for its being built like a fortress, to defend this holy place from the hands of the infidel. It is a relief to go out to Shepherd's Field and breathe the pure air, sweet with the memories of Ruth and Boaz, of the little

shepherd-boy David, and of angels singing their song of peace to a mankind besieged by war throughout the ages.

Passing on the shadow of Rachel's Tomb and through the Valley of Hinnom, we came to Mount Sion and Jerusalem's walls. Crowds of people—tourists, natives, pilgrims—filled the streets and the square in front of the Jaffa Gate. We drove on to try to find the Youth Hostel where we hoped to find room. Fortunately, I was accepted (on my old Auburn University student I.D. card, which the warden preferred to my more recent Iranian one from Pahlavi), and what could have been a very expensive short stay in Jerusalem turned into an exciting week of sightseeing for about \$20, including breakfast for the two of us.

We had one more day of rent on the car, so we drove off the next morning to see another one of King Herod's fortresses—the Herodion—and the surrealistically beautiful Beth-Guvrin caves, the filming site of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. The man-made caves resulted from years of cutting blocks of limestone for building purposes. It's a beautiful, peaceful place: fields sprinkled with poppies, daisies, wild irises, and numerous other flowers, almost like God's own little garden.

Back in Jerusalem we set out to visit the new city, adorned as a bride, shining in the sun as jasper and onyx. And then we entered the old city walls through Jaffa's Gate, and wished we could stay there forever. There is a mystical enchantment about this walled piece of holy ground that takes hold of one's soul. Here Moslems, Jews, and Christians of every denomination have lived in friendly cooperation, even in the midst of Israel's worst times. And now, when the golden city has gone back to the descendants of King David, this sense of unity, of the disappearance of barriers of language, costumes, and prejudices is really amazing. Whether one worships at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, at the Dome of the Rock, or at the Wailing Wall, one feels God's presence most intensely, as one feels the suffering, the contradictions, the faith and hope of mankind.

It was a most holy week indeed. On Thursday we visited the Upper Room, that cenacle where Jesus ate his last Passover with his disciples. Then we followed the crowds to the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane, where we prayed through the night at the Church of All Nations. The Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu reminded us of Jesus' sufferings as he was arrested and brought to the High Priest, thrown down the pit where prisoners were kept till they could be sentenced.

On Friday we went to the Antonia, the Roman fortress where Jesus was condemned to death by Pilate. And in sad remembrance we followed the stations of the cross all along the Via Dolorosa, pilgrims from all over the world taking turns to bear the heavy cross, while singing and praying. Then we relived the tragic hours at Calvary, the descent from the cross, the burial at the Holy Sepulchre. It was late when we walked back to the hostel, in silence, under the brightness of a full moon.

Saturday was a day of rest. Being the Jewish Passover, all stores, restaurants and businesses were closed. But early on Sunday morning all the city's bells pealed for joy. High Mass at the empty Tomb was celebrated by the Vatican's envoy, with the mighty sound of the organ and the choir singing Allelujah at the top of their voices, sending shivers through one's body. The only regret was that our time was up, and we should leave the next day.

That same night we boarded the bus to Tel-Aviv. It had been a most inspiring, most wonderful experience! We had just enough money to get back to Shiraz, and we had to spend the night sitting in the airport's lounge (we had lots of company) comforting our hungry stomachs with the thought of a meal in the airplane—even though it would be only matzos....

And as our plane flew over the city in the morning, I looked out toward Jerusalem with longing, and repeated in my heart the words of the Psalmist:

*Peace be within your walls,
and security within your towers!*

UNTITLED

before nightfall her singing starts
a clear pure sound
that she pours over us
like cold spring water.
but we cannot awaken;
we simply roll over
and between her songs
we order another round.
the darkness settles over us
like an eyeless hood.

—A. J. Wright

HER FIRST LOVER

Wasting, the moon drifts in grey.
The stars are whispering faint light
While she chants a sad lover's song
Of her heart to the knowing night
Who comforts with a palsied wrinkled hand.

Memories are the light of the stars,
Some bright, others dim; his eyes were the sun.
Entranced, her eyes shift from star to star
Before the twinkling becomes imaginary,
Though they are real like the moon's light.

Past passion she is now for him
Who slipped into her heart so deeply.
With fine tuned passion he played
Unheard music, timed to her heart,
Sprinkling tingling music for every image
He flashed before her wondering eyes.
Spinning her imagination could never grasp
The sensual flurry, the flood of his presence.
His subtle strokes set the sun's perfect course
And his very image flowed in her blood.

Flashing his steady eyes toward her
Whom he had touched to the marrow,
He thought of love, but his practiced
Fingers held his heart down cold.
Seeking to catch new passion, his autumn heart
Cooling, he ran desperate, yet in easy guilt,
Though he had wallowed in her blood.

—Percy Jones



FISH STORY

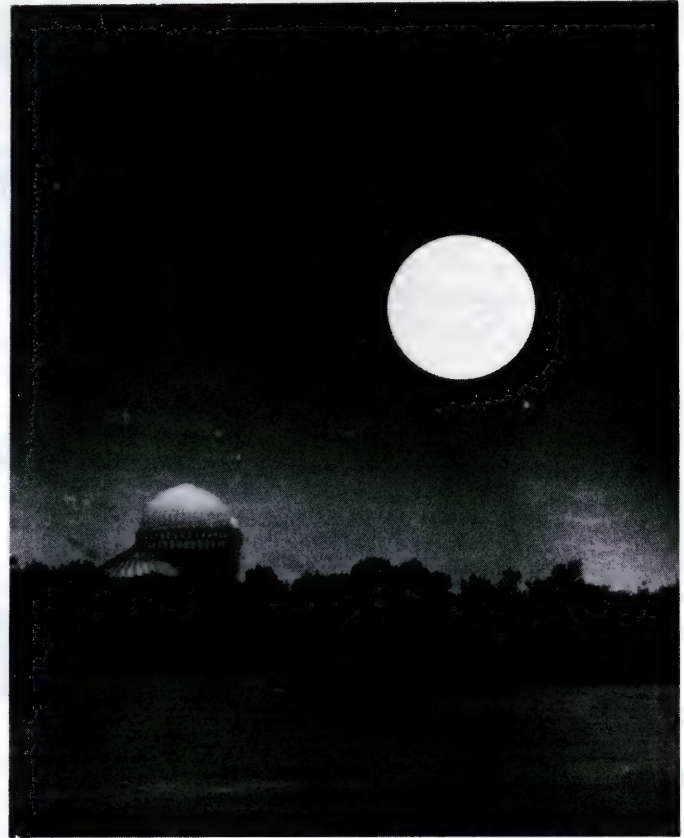
I went fishin'
 Fer yer love one day
 Got up courage
 To ask fer a date
 So I cut a cane pole
 From a straight piece of cool
 And dug worms of charm
 Fer bait

I hopped into
 A phone booth
 Dialed
 You said hello
 And then
 I baited the hook
 With suave and cool
 And threw that rascal in

Well I casted to the left
 And I seined to the right
 Got my hopes up
 But they they sank
 When I tossed my line
 At the middle of your heart
 And it snagged
 In the weeds by the bank

I couldn't ketch nothin'
 In the pond of yer love
 Cause they just weren't bitin'
 That day
 But then I remembered
 That's the way
 It's s'posed to be—
 The big 'uns always get away

—Billy Leonard



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM HAGOOD

THE RIPPLE OF BELLS

The scarves of the women are starched like their hair.
 They layer their makeup and underwear.
 Oh, where is the cornsilk that shimmered, that swam
 In the eyes of young men at the turn of the year?
 Oh where are the eyelids cast downward like moons
 Set free from the closets of warm afternoons,
 The coos from the rooftops, the opening wings
 Which met to make shadows as perfect as rings?
 Oh where are the gentlemen slow to smile,
 Who wore diamond stickpins, who loved them awhile,
 The lovely young women who came in a spring
 Scented with jasmine and absinthe and frange,
 The women who flowered, who fell to the call
 Of the pigeons, the ripple of bells, the sound
 Of gold falling, like pebbles in wells.

Oh where are the virgins, the darlings?

—Helen Speaks



ILLUSTRATION BY ANN RANKIN

You're it

FICTION BY BUBBA WRIGHT

The doctor had said that Grandpa couldn't last more than a couple of days, and on this, the third day, he had struggled and was tiring. All of my aunts and uncles, sensing death's presence, had gathered to wait out his last hours. It was just the death of a worn out old man to most of my relatives, and to me, too, at the time, I guess. But now that I think back to it I do mark a strange feeling of awe for the old man on that night.

My first memory is of them all standing solemnly on the front porch in the flower-fragrant spring air, murmuring in low voices and looking across the yard to the darkening, hazy pasture. The late evening sun had faded, and the bright flowers of an hour before disappeared in the dark. The birds were quiet now, except that somewhere across the road a whip-poorwill called distantly.

My cousins and I had finished a supper of cold fried chicken and potato salad that my aunts had fixed for the occasion, and had dashed off to play hide-and-seek in the dark. I played wholeheartedly in those days and would bound through my grand-

mother's jungle of shrubbery with savage, gleeful abandon when *It* would shout "1-2-3 on Lloyd," without a thought of falling down or cutting my bare feet. That night I made a dash to my traditional hiding place behind the bridal wreath bushes under my grandfather's bedroom window. When my breath and heartbeat had quieted enough for me to hear what was going on, I heard Aunt Maude and Uncle Howard, Grandpa's brother and sister, talking real low. I didn't hear anyone else in the room.

At first I forgot most of what they said, but for some reason Aunt Maude's words, "He's resigned to death, but he will not rest in it," came to mind later when my father rounded all us sweaty grimy boys up on the front steps and said, "Boys, Daddy's dead." Then as if in a dream I had riding home after the funeral, their whole conversation came back to me. It has stood behind me ever since like some long-forgotten landmark in a twilight world.

Aunt Maude walked to the window and her large shadow blocked out the criss-cross shadow of the window

pane on the lawn, darkening the spot where I lay. She said, "The air's mighty sweet outside. Figures he'd die late in the spring when all the restlessness of early spring is over, don't it," in a strange, scared sort of whisper.

There was a pause and then Uncle Howard said, "Yeah, I see what you mean."

Aunt Maude said, "Late winter was his favorite time of year. It was like he was always expecting something holy each new spring. He was almost likable when he was hopeful like that." Silence. "And when spring would really get here it'd pass him by, and all that fire and hope he'd worked up would smoulder into nothing and he'd get sour and take to drinking. That's why he'd get after that wife and those boys so hard, cause they always looked forward to swimming and blackberries and fishing, and all that would pass him by."

Two rocking chairs were rhythmically rolling in time now, and the old mantel clock pendulum was loudly swinging away the seconds. Some cousins behind the house were whooping it up. I heard cousin David

yell, "1-2-3 on Donnie, 1-2-3 on Donnie." I heard them crashing through the shrubbery and then I heard Donnie shout, "Free! I'm on base free!"

The old man moaned and rattled the bed a little. Aunt Maude said, "He ain't resting."

Uncle Howard said, "He ain't since he was nineteen or twenty. I used to have to sleep with him until he got married at twenty-three, ya know. He never could rest peaceful then."

"Twenty-two," corrected Maude.

"Anyway," said Uncle Howard, "I never could weasel out of him what was wrong. He'd always get mad and say nothing was wrong and to leave him alone."

"Maybe he hisself didn't know what was wrong," said Aunt Maude. "Strange, though, because that's when Grandpa died, wasn't it?"

Uncle Howard said he reckoned it was about that time. "He sure did try real hard, though, to figure himself out. It was like his mind was all time wrestlin' with itself, or way out lost in the woods looking for home or something."

"Yeah, that's for sure," said Aunt Maude. "Wasn't nothin' in this life held any joy for him. No work nor any pleasure—not even all those kids or all his money." She paused a moment, took a deep breath, and sighed. Then she said, "He was restless like he was afraid the earth would crumble if he relaxed a moment."

A pause; one of them sighed. Aunt Maude said, "He heard the devil's laugh in every breath he took. Lord, he really loved this life, but he just couldn't see any sense to it. He was always looking for the sense of things, but that devil's laugh just kept on mocking him. Hell, he wanted to be kind and restful, but felt like if he was grim enough all the craziness would go away."

Aunt Maude's words must have shocked them both because they said nothing for a long while. I could hear the old man's air coming in short raspy breaths that made my back shiver. Aunt Maude raised herself from the rocker with a groan, the split cane seat creaking in relief.

In a fretful whisper she said, "I think he's going now, brother. He's wanting

to give up, but look at his hands clenching and unclenching, he's fighting it, too. God, he's a strong man."

A silence.

"Or scared," said Uncle Howard. "Let's not call the children, Maude. They never understood what all that restlessness was about. They were all scared of him, thought he was crazy; well . . . maybe they had their reasons, but this moment is too big for them to understand with proper feelin'."

Things were happening fast now, I could tell. There was a pause and then Aunt Maude said, "We really should go get the children—at least the boys." But I didn't hear anybody leave the room.

A vague feeling of nausea caught my stomach and I whimpered a little.

Then there was a harsh, still moment when the space between the second stroke-knocks of the clock lasted an eternity. I knew what had happened. In a solemn tone from her chest, Aunt Maude moaned, "The death angel was here and has passed. He is resigned to death, but he will not rest in it. Go and get the children."

David crashed through the bridal wreath grinning and shouting, "I got Lloyd. Lloyd's *It!* Lloyd's *It!*"

I did not move. He said, "Hey, you're *It*; let's play!"

I said, "Grandpa's dead." He must not have heard, because he said, "Come on, let's play!"

He ran off shouting, "Lloyd's *It* and won't play. I'm not *It* any more; and he won't play!"



THE NINTH HOUR

There is in the deep, far away light of the
end of day
the terrible sorrow, the fear of life
in the oncoming night.
The stars of dreams are lost—
are gone—
eyes hidden in the darkness,
carried on the wind to the distance.

I cannot sleep.
My shadow is nearer to me now
and yet the fear is the same—
life unwarmed, hard-worked away,
no prayers said, no tears wept,
no hands held nor eyelids kissed.
I wish for a daughter to
hold my weak hands and white head;
to pray at my knees.
Dread time that is so long in passing quickly.
I am that handful of dust in the wasted moments—
I am an old man in an empty house.

—C. Ackerman



ILLUSTRATION BY NANCY PLAYLE

FADS FADS FADS

BY JEFF BISHOP

Fads.

The origin of the word is unknown, and the actual sources of most fads are lost either in the mists of antiquity or in the id of the current masses. Yet we all know the exaggerated zeal with which particular fads are practiced. Remember Hula hoops, the twist, zoot suits, flappers, crew-cuts, goldfish swallowing, flagpole sitting, and phone booth stuffing? Or look at plants, frisbees, foosball, C.B. radios, and pet rocks. And other fads represent an important segment of our national heritage—they were here long before the founding fathers penned their names upon the Declaration of Independence. So let us pause for a few Bicentennial minutes and review the history of the Great American Fad.

Perhaps the first noteworthy American fad centered in the

Massachusetts town of Salem. In 1692, the Salem Glee Club and Boosters' Union began the practice of selecting the most "bewitching" girls in town and showering them with honors befitting their acquired status. The chosen girls became the immediate talk of the town.

The young ladies were prominent at the various social functions of early New England. Some were the centers of attraction at "Beat Plymouth Rock High" bonfires. Others made big splashes at neighborhood pool parties. Several young charmers won the highest accolade of all—a necklace of stylish brown jute. This prize went to the real swingers in the crowd.

The practice was banned after five months, and for several reasons. First, it was apparent that the fad was taking its toll amongst the young women.

Many of the ladies fell dead from the excitement accompanying their high stations. Also, the Salem Glee Club and Boosters' Union made a ghastly error when they tabbed the wives of the governor and local minister as "Sweethearts of the Month." This put Salem in an uproar, as it was then not socially acceptable for the spouses of such eminent men to steal the thunder at bonfires and pool parties.

The next notable fad occurred in Boston, on the evening of December 16, 1773. For obvious reasons, the fad was a short-lived one. In fact, it existed for that one night alone.

The craze started at a teenager's costume party on the municipal pier in Boston. The theme of the event was "A Night in Old Sasquany," and the revellers were dressed in appropriate Indian apparel.

Although the chaperones for the party had banned all alcoholic beverages from the affair, several enterprising teens smuggled flasks of Tequila Sunrise onto the pier. This, of course, resulted in a high-flying pow-wow.

When the flasks ran dry and the euphoria was wearing off, the crowd became desperate for more. Spying three ships docked nearby, the crowd decided to take a chance at raiding and plundering the vessels.

The kids found no booze aboard, but did find several crates of strangely shaped leaves. Aha! they thought, Mary Jo. So, they proceeded to roll the leaves into joints and smoke them. When they discovered their error in judgment, the teens became quite rowdy and dumped the crates, which were actually loaded with tea, into the harbor.

The following day, a small faction of rednecks protested to the City Council, complaining that nobody was safe until the young hoodlums were dragged in and strung up by their toes. However, the Council, stating the belief that "kids will be kids," took action no more serious than banning any further parties on the pier. We all know that this did not stop the youths from finding other means of diversion. Remember those moonlight canoe trips on an icy river, and that wild slumber party in the snow?

As America grew, so grew its fads. The admission of Kentucky into the Union brought the coonskin cap craze to Bluegrass Country. The hat became an instant success in Kentucky and Tennessee, but the fashion did not spread to the Eastern Seaboard until Andrew Jackson's election to the Presidency in 1828. Members of Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet" wore coonskin caps to all meetings, and this practice soon spread to both the Senate and the House. It did not take the general public long to catch on. By the end of Jackson's first month in office, everyone on the streets of Washington displayed a coonskin cap as an emblem of his loyalty to Andy.

That same year, 1828, saw the beginning of another fad that has only recently enjoyed some revival in America. The "Georgia Pet Rock Rush" began in that state, and spread some twenty years later to California. Of course, pet rock owners were quite discriminating in their choice of pets. Only the finest stones of gold qualified for pedigrees.

Problems came about in capturing the finest gold rocks in order to fill the great demand for pets. The rocks were cunning little devils, hiding in mountain brooks and barren hillsides. Many men became pet rock hunters, and some even lost their lives in the quest for the little buggers. It was a hazardous fad that carried little satisfaction for the consumer, as well as the hunter. Still, the public had become so charmed by their pet rocks that they demanded more and more. The demand was never quite satisfied, however, because the rocks had become an overhunted species and were on the verge of extinction for some time.

The final fad mentioned here took place within the lifetime of our grandparents, and even during the childhood of most parents. This fad was the "Great Depression Fling" of 1929 to the late 1930's.

We've all read about the glory of those days, when giant pep rallies broke out at banks, and fashionable people got their kicks by selling apples on street corners. Even then, standing in long lines was fun. The contagion soon became old to many people, and

Franklin Roosevelt took some steps to alleviate the craze. Yet, his efforts were not quite enough. It took another fad, World War II, to divert the interest of the American public to bigger and better things.

Many stuffed shirts fear that the "Great Depression Fling" is coming back. They warn that the current fads, inflation and recession, are just preliminaries to another "Great Depression Fling."

The President is doing all he can to prevent a recurrence of this fad. He has even introduced two new crazes, detente and the "Jerry Bug." We all know about the former, but not enough about the latter. The "Jerry Bug" is the latest dance, consisting of just two simple steps: walk, and fall. It has already caught on in such places as wet plane ramps and steep ski-slopes, but it has yet to really sweep the nation.

But, like all fads, the "Jerry Bug" will catch on, and we'll all be singing its praises:

"First you walk out, then you fall.
We're doing the 'Jerry Bug' and we're
having a ball."

"Yeah!"

ROLES (for Kowalski)

A black dog was chewing
On a white dog's ear.
Perhaps he was whispering,
"Why don't we lie here?"
Maybe he was telling her
The puppies he had sired,
A one-way conversation
And she soon got tired,
And left her partner blinking.
I looked and she was gone,
Probably thinking,
"How they do run on!"

—Martha Duggar



PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILL DICKEY

Yellow River

Yellow River snakes its way down the northwest panhandle of Florida carrying with it the yellow clay deposits from which it derives its name. The water's smooth, tranquil surface is only disrupted by an occasional snag or limb dragging in the current. The river gives life and adds beauty to what would otherwise be a barren land of slash pines and scrub oaks.

Towering cypress adorned with patches of Spanish moss line the river's banks. Huge oaks and slash pines shade the river as a parasol against the midday sun. Majestic white egrets and herons fishing the water stand out against plush green background like lights on a Christmas tree. Yellow River's shimmering waters hold and reflect this beauty as if it were her own.

Yellow River calms the soul who looks upon her waters. The dull flavor of my hometown, Crestview, a taste my palate refuses, is spiced to acceptance by this river which flows by my home.

—Phil Campbell

An Old Country Church

I walk into the quietness and stillness of an old country church. Each step I make upon the wooden floor echoes throughout the large auditorium. That old church holds many memories for me, and I am revisited by many of them. Both death and new life have come about many times inside these four walls. The memory of the out-of-tune congregation singing loudly on a summer Sunday morning rings clearly in my ears as I sit down at the old piano. On the benches lie the old cardboard fans much worn from use—mostly by my Grandmother while I lay asleep in her lap during the sermons. As I stand in front of the church, I feel myself giving way to the thoughts of funerals and death. A sudden chill comes over me, but then I feel warm again as I realize that there is no use in the fear of death since it inevitably will come. Then I slowly turn away and the echoes of my footfalls grow dim.

—Karen Brown

Jack mountain



A Modest Announcement

Once again rising temperatures on the Plains signal my imminent summer departure for the deep shade, the quiet caves, and the cool springs of my native mountains. I yearn to go in my usual fashion, leaving unobtrusively in the shadows of the night without a ripple of activity to demand ceremonious farewells. However, circumstance this year demands a slight alteration of my accustomed routine. Meditation upon the significance of our Bicentennial celebration has aroused my patriotic impulses and compels me to make the following modest announcement:

Citizens of America, I am available for occupancy during the next four years of that white ante-bellum mansion just across the Potomac from Arlington, Virginia. A deep sense of propriety forbids that I seek that incumbency with fervid appeal and ostentatious declamation. Therefore, I put the whole matter quite simply: If you elect me freely, I will serve gladly.

That unselfish, unequivocal promise seems adequate to set in motion a self-propelling campaign with enough impetus to gain the momentum necessary for inevitable triumph in November. Thus, I would now be free to go home if there were not scattered throughout the country some querulous and quibbling souls who will undoubtedly seek later to trouble my supporters and perhaps even to intrude upon my vacation. To prevent such mischief when the certainty of my election becomes apparent, I offer herewith the following qualifying statements:

Mine is a non-partisan, write-in candidacy conveyed solely by the foregoing published announcement—I do not desire the votes of those who cannot read or write. I solicit votes only, no contributions—I do not wish to be beholden to anyone or accountable to any meddling federal agency. (Those so moved by my dedication that they must contribute cash or else suffer a

dire sense of guilt may secure relief by depositing funds in my Special Trust to Pay Off the National Debt.) Immediately after inauguration, I will embark upon a program to re-establish Latin as a public-school prerequisite, to bring back the old *Blueback Speller*, and to require literacy not only of public school teachers and college instructors and administrators, but also of all those exercising the full privileges of citizenship.

That is my program—one as chaste, simple, and sensible as my candidacy. So, my dear readers, when some unsavory character objects that I have neglected such problems as the economy and national defense, remind him: (1) That the eradication of illiteracy will create an industry that will double the gross national product and bring prosperity to all. (2) And that “the pen is mightier than the sword”—Now, I am on my way. See you next fall.



SILVER GREY

Sundown came early with no lingering hue
and nighttime was deeper today;
a chill wind blew eastward with salt on its breath
and the moon was a dull silver grey.
From over near morning the low thunder grew
till the twilight breathed hoarsely aloud;
rain came invisibly wet and cruel
and time was a silver grey cloud.
I huddled inside myself, holding on tight
to what I could salvage as dry,
shut out the sights and the sounds and the tastes
and let go of a silver grey sigh.

—Karen W. Lambert

WE ARE

cannibals
eating each other's minds
to feed our own
robbing the strength of a weak one
to build up the strength of the strong
attacking another when he's down
like an animal starved for a kill
sucking blood and sapping strength
with fangs of ice and unfeeling claws
hating for no reason
but hated for a cause

—Jane Sterchi Parry

INDEX OF CONTRIBUTORS

DR. ROBERT ANDELSON, a faculty member of the *Circle* Editorial Board, is a professor of philosophy. He has contributed to various scholarly journals and is the author of *Imputed Rights*.

JEFF BISHOP, a sophomore in secondary education, would definitely be an interesting high school history teacher.

THOM BOTSFORD, founding father and first editor of the *Circle*, is teaching English at Alexander City State Junior College and obviously looking for another job.

DAVID BRADFORD, a student member of the Editorial Board, has been appointed against his will as the *Circle* staff photographer, and against our will as the resident expert on truck driver songs.

JAN COOPER, the 1974-75 editor of the *Circle*, is still here as a volunteer flunkie for this year's staff. After accepting this quarter's assignment out of guilt for not having written anything last quarter, she has become an expert on insurance and may open her agency in Tuscaloosa next fall.

MARTHA DUGGAR, associate editor of the *Circle*, will be editor of the magazine next year. She plans to start cracking the whip some time in the near future, so all interested parties had best contact her as soon as possible for writing assignments and staff positions.

EROICA VON FANNIKEN is still happily encamped somewhere in Sewell Hall, serving as historian and resident Mom for the abbey. When she does stray outside it is usually on a bicycle, and at a distance she vaguely resembles Dr. Charlotte Ward.

PAT KAETZ, a freshman in English education, is being published in this issue simply because he threatened in a letter accompanying his manuscript to "hang by my toes from the top of Haley Center and push ping-pong balls up my nose until I choke" if the article weren't printed.

BILLY LEONARD used to write for the *Circle*, but since he became editor he's spent most of his time hunting people and xerox machines. However, His Editorship, prodded by the screaming and yelling of former editor J.C. (If I had to write a column, you do too!) repented

and put fingers to typewriter keys for this issue and his *auf weidersein* to Auburn. In June he will be moving to Chapel Hill, N.C., where he has been named a Morehead Fellow in law at the University of North Carolina.

KAYE LOVVORN, advisor to the *Circle*, is the editor of *The Auburn Alumnews*. She was the first student to graduate with a journalism major from Auburn (December 1964) and was once rumored to be working on a master's degree in English.

RENA MOUNT, a student member of the Editorial Board, is a senior in English. She has contributed poetry to *The Southern Humanities Review*, *Carolina Quarterly*, and *Folio*, and absurdity to the *Circle* and *The Auburn Bulletin*.

JACK MOUNTAIN—a non-partisan non-candidate for the presidency—can only be found in Ross Square when the campus is silent and the moon is full.

JAN BOYD NEAL is a journalism graduate who worked for *The Alumnews* and briefly for a smalltown newspaper and radio station before beginning a career in social work. She currently lives in her hometown, Montgomery, works for the welfare department, and raises a garden in her spare time.

ANNETTE NORRIS, a student member of the Editorial Board, is a crummy proofreader but a good darkroom assistant and very useful for reciting from T.S. Eliot's "The Wasteland." If she's lucky, the Black Angel will soon complete a master's degree in English.

HELENI PEDERSOLI went to Iran (where her husband was a visiting professor) for a year and a half following her graduation from Auburn. Before she returned to campus last September, she managed to travel most of the Middle East and half of Europe in addition to working as a grammar school librarian and doing graduate studies at Pavlavi University. Currently a graduate student in English at Auburn, she has printed several poems in the *Circle* and as an undergraduate wrote a monthly column for *The Alumnews*.

NANCY PLAYLE, mild-mannered *Circle* art director, sometimes takes time out from her weaving to be a graduate student in textile design.

SCARLETT ROBINSON makes her fiction debut in this issue. The journalism-English-education major who knows half the people on campus has written features for the *Circle* and *The Atlanta Constitution*. Her varied work experience also includes a stint with University Relations at Auburn and the *Alumni News* at the University of Alabama.

JERRY RODEN, JR., a faculty member of the Editorial Board, teaches composition (English). He was editor of *The Auburn Alumnews* from 1957 to 1965 and is a regular columnist for that publication.

JIM SHOFFNER, a senior in journalism, is a devotee of H. P. Lovecraft and of fantastic fiction in general. He has had previous stories published in the *Circle* and *The Miskatonic* and has prepared a script of "Dark Shapes Rising" for production by WEGL radio.

DR. CHARLOTTE WARD, a faculty member of the *Circle* Editorial Board, is an associate professor of physics. She has contributed to various scientific journals (including *The Journal of Molecular Spectroscopy*) and has written a physical science textbook for college students, *This Blue Planet*. In her spare time, she satisfies a civic need by providing Auburn with a colorful character, because she says every community needs one.

DAVID WILLIAMS, laid-back dude and fisherman extraordinaire, is the editorial assistant for *The Auburn Alumnews*. He has had articles and poetry published in previous issues of the *Circle*.

JOHNNY WILLIAMS breaks his firmly cast mold as *Circle* satirist with a short story in this issue. He is a graduate student in English who in his spare time tries in vain to get in touch with Jerry Roden, Jr.

A.J. WRIGHT, a student member of the *Circle* Editorial Board, is a part-time graduate student in English who has contributed both articles and poetry to the *Circle*. He is also a music critic for *The Auburn Plainsman* and an announcer for radio station WEGL.

BUBBA WRIGHT, a senior in journalism, gained most of his experience from writing letters. He has no specific plans for the future, but ultimately hopes to write something somewhere.